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# SECULARISM

ITS PROGRESS AND ITS MORALS

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WITH THE  
COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK

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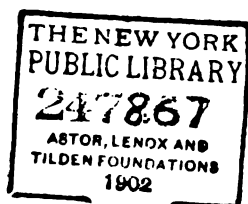
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# CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIAL SURROUNDINGS . . .	I
CHAPTER II.	
INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIAL SURROUNDINGS ( <i>Concluded</i> ) . . . . .	25
CHAPTER III.	
INTUITION . . . . .	49
CHAPTER IV.	
INTUITION ( <i>Concluded</i> ) . . . . .	81
CHAPTER V.	
ADVANCED THEOLOGY . . . . .	112
CHAPTER VI.	
QUALIFIED SCIENCE . . . . .	144
CHAPTER VII.	
ETHICS . . . . .	170
CHAPTER VIII.	
ETHICS ( <i>Continued</i> ) . . . . .	197

	PAGE
CHAPTER IX.	
ETHICS ( <i>Concluded</i> ) . . . . .	224
CHAPTER X.	
PROGRESSIVE AND CONSERVATIVE PHASES OF THE SECULAR MOVEMENT . . . . .	255
CHAPTER XI.	
THE STANDARDS OF MORALS ACCOMPANYING THE TRANSITION FROM ECCLESIASTICISM TO SECU- LARISM . . . . .	284
CHAPTER XII.	
RELIGIOUS CONSOLATION . . . . .	308
CHAPTER XIII.	
SACRED AUTHORITY AS INFLUENCED BY THE PROG- RESS OF KNOWLEDGE . . . . .	333
CHAPTER XIV.	
CONCLUSION . . . . .	359
INDEX . . . . .	381

# THE PROGRESS AND THE MORALS OF SECULARISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIAL SURROUNDINGS.

**I** SHALL endeavor in this and the succeeding chapter to examine the relative weight of the influences which are exerted upon theologic belief, on the one hand by industrial, and on the other by intellectual, surroundings. By industrial surroundings I mean more particularly to indicate those impersonal forces which have grown out of modern discovery and invention; by intellectual surroundings, those influences by which one mind acts upon another, either directly through the processes of verbal reasoning and by the exercise of mental and assumed spiritual authority, or else less directly through books.

If we take two boys of equal natural intelligence, one a deaf-mute, and the other endowed with normal powers of hearing and speech; if we begin their education by placing the deaf-mute in a shop where he is taught mechanics entirely by association with

## 2 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

machinery and the steam-engine, and the other at a school where he is taught the theory of mechanics and of the steam-engine, we shall have in the first example an instance of the influence of physical surroundings, and in the second an instance of the influence of intellectual surroundings. I have assumed in this illustration a complete separation of the two forces which I have respectively indicated as physical and mental. In point of fact, they are not strictly separable : they are interdependent and correlated as parts of one great force ; we may, nevertheless, hold them in the mind as separate, in order thereby to be able to study their relative qualities, and to estimate, if we may not definitely ascertain, the weight of each as a contributing factor to the general movement.

To be affected more by verbal reasoning than by impersonal circumstances, or conversely, is not a matter of choice. The difference arises largely from the situation in which one happens to be, and from the mental and physical aptitudes which one happens to have. One who, from mental fitness and opportunity, becomes a student of the cloister, will naturally derive his impressions more directly from other minds or from books than from actual contact with affairs ; whilst another who is placed in a position where he becomes an industrial actor, and who is suited to his place, will be likely to be more interested in and influenced by physical surroundings, and less interested in and influenced by the higher processes of verbal reasoning, than he who is the student. It is obvious enough that these influences

as contrasted with each other produce different results.

The industrial classes are not regarded by the metaphysician as having a propensity for abstract reasoning. From the very character of their occupations, these classes are not apt to become interested in such study. Even if there are those of them who have the mental qualification and disposition, they have not the time required for obtaining the necessary discipline. As a matter of fact, comparatively little that they know has been derived from the study of books—nothing perhaps from the study of books which deal in abstract reasoning. They have received their knowledge chiefly from the object-lessons of their occupations. This, of course, does not imply that they are not thinkers; it does imply that their thinking, stimulated and otherwise influenced by their surroundings, is likely to be of the more practical kind. It is because they are not inclined to abstractions—it is because their surroundings occupy their attention and thought—that they become more impressed by natural law than by “supernatural intervention.” Not only is it true that these workers learn to think upon the properties of the things with which they are associated as natural instead of supernatural, but it is also true that this kind of thought grows upon them, and so becomes habit. As each invention requires a higher degree of skill in its application, a higher degree of intelligence is produced by it, and from the accumulation of inventions a progressive and general movement in intelligence inevitably results.

#### 4 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

As the industrial man begins in his daily occupation to direct those forces of Nature which are susceptible of direction, he begins to draw impressions from those simpler and more direct manifestations of Nature in the moving forces nearest him, and he thus gradually develops a capacity to discern and generalize regarding the higher and more complex manifestations of Nature. He may be, and indeed often is, defective in dialectic skill, but such lessons as he does receive are constantly accompanied by physical illustration, and the conclusions which he derives from these are of a kind which are associated with his experiences. Behind all his conclusions lies the great sum of all the industries—the physical fruits of discovery and invention. That which the ordinary man lacks to make him an adept in the philosophy of modern science, is mental scope and discipline; in other words, the power to generalize not only upon the data afforded by his immediate surroundings, but upon data generally. I do not mean that the industrial worker usually has those mental qualities which are necessary to make him a philosopher in the higher sense of the word; nor do I think all of his class are ever likely to have them. The natural mental gifts which are requisite for the higher philosophy are not common; besides, as I have hitherto intimated, even if one has the requisite mental quality and disposition, so long as he remains an industrial worker his very occupation makes it improbable that he should acquire the fuller discipline which the philosopher must have. I do mean, however, to suggest that all the immediate mental

tendencies of the industrial class lie in the direction of applied science, and to the extent of the mental capacity of the members of this class, are they likely to move in this direction.

When I speak of the influences which modern industry exerts on the minds of those engaged in it as a class, I must not be understood as meaning to imply that these influences affect all individuals of that class alike. There are great degrees of physical difference in the various industrial employments, and there are also great degrees of intellectual and mental difference in the capacities possessed by the individuals engaged in these employments. It would be absurd, therefore, to expect anything like a uniform result from these varied influences on these various capacities.

Keeping in view the foregoing qualifications, the proposition which I make is, that the general influences of all industrial surroundings, taken together, upon the varied minds of the persons associated with these industries,<sup>1</sup> tend to move these minds towards a higher appreciation of natural law as such, and tow-

<sup>1</sup> Among the varieties of men engaged in industry there are some whose minds move slowly under any circumstances, and others whose minds exhibit a decided bent towards theories. With the former, theologic and all other preconceptions are rigid, and therefore very hard to displace, even under powerful external influences; whilst with the latter it often occurs that the removal of one set of delusions from the mind only makes way for the substitution of another and different set of delusions. It is for this reason that one of the salient incidents of the great transitions accomplished by modern industry is a marked tendency, among a certain proportion of the industrial class who are untutored or but slightly tutored in mental discipline, to set afoot all sorts of economic and social vagaries.



## 6 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

ards a correspondingly lower estimate of supernatural interference ; and also that these influences greatly transcend the influences of a directly intellectual kind which are exerted by the minds of the philosophers and scholars upon lower minds.

Of course we must recognize that it is impossible to measure with exactness the force of these influences, both because of the difficulty of holding them in the mind as separate, and also because of the difficulty of giving definite value to a power so complex as is the sum of our surroundings, or to one so subtle as is the power of one mind over another. We may, however, infer their relative preponderance by studying the results which flow from them ; and it seems to me that we shall thus discover that this relative preponderance has been commonly misestimated, especially by those who assume exclusive possession of what is called the higher thought ; that is, that the formative character of that influence exercised over the common mind by the higher processes of metaphysical philosophy has been generally credited with a degree of importance to which it is not justly entitled, and that, on the other hand, the formative character of the influence of impersonal surroundings has not been given its due weight. This misestimate is due to facts which I shall briefly notice.

Among the scholars and metaphysical philosophers themselves there is an inherent tendency to magnify the high vocation of metaphysical philosophy. Scholarship itself imparts to the scholar a sense of mental supremacy. Accompanying this there is

usually a relic of that pride which so characterized all the older metaphysicians and scholiasts—a pride which manifests itself in the wish to keep knowledge from the common people; besides, the attitude of metaphysics toward the masses is always authoritative rather than persuasive. Just as these masses are unaccustomed to or ignorant of the processes of thought by which the metaphysician deals with premises and reaches conclusions, they are obliged to take whatever they do take upon his authority and not upon their own examination and reasoning.

With the masses, the fact of having the superior mental class to do their thinking, in itself involves an exaggeration as to the effect of metaphysical thought upon their own mental progress. The estimate which the common mind entertains of the higher is one which cannot be built upon examination, since the mental processes of the higher mind are uncomprehended by the lower. This estimate is a product of the imagination, impressed with a sense of awe. Among the uneducated, therefore, the estimate of the influence of metaphysics is, and always must be, vague, because metaphysics is beyond their comprehension. That the direct influence of metaphysical thought as a means of developing the common mind is overestimated, becomes entirely plain, I think, when we turn from the low estimate which the metaphysician usually entertains of the mind of the masses, and the vague estimate the masses entertain of the metaphysician, to the actual effect which metaphysics produces upon the uneducated. Metaphysics gives its conclusions as authority concerning

## 8 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

things which are not understood. It must be seen that the influence of authority is not to induce mental activity, since it affords no encouragement for independent thinking to the minds of those it is intended to govern. Metaphysics, in exercising authority, excludes the exercise of persuasion; in dictating its conclusions, it can never encourage objective investigation. Metaphysics, then, so far from conferring upon the common mind that spontaneity on which all great mental and physical progress depends, produces repression. It is accordingly shown in all history that, so long as metaphysics and theology deigned only to give conclusions by authority, and to seek to enforce them, the common mind showed no signs of progress; and it was only when theology was forced to open slightly the door for spontaneous thought that the common mind began to move. Since that time it has been only as metaphysical philosophy and theology have been driven by physical philosophy that this general mental movement has become accelerated.

Now, with those other kinds of influences which come from physical surroundings, all the conditions of mental movement, so far as these concern the masses, are changed. Physical surroundings, by their suggestive and persuasive character, not only reach the few, but the great mass of men, and they are instant, intimate, and constant in their operation. The modes of thought which they generate are not of the subtle kind which come from metaphysical books, which, as I have said, the masses do not read, and which they could not understand if they did:

they are modes of thought resulting primarily from facts which the immediate occupation of the masses compels them to examine and realize ; the effect of these facts upon the mind is to promote spontaneous thinking, and thus to counteract conclusions which have been derived from authority or the thinking of others.

Another reason why due importance has not been given to the influence of these industrial surroundings upon theology is, that the industrial workers themselves do not often furnish any outspoken evidence of the changes which have gradually taken place among them with reference to their beliefs.<sup>1</sup> They rarely, if ever, address themselves to the public on the subject. Whilst they are active enough with tongue and pen in discussing their immediate relations to their daily occupation, so that one meets theories from industrial workers of all kinds and in every rank, yet these industrial workers very seldom appear in the polemical field, and therefore their relations to religious questions do not much attract public attention. Their attitude towards theology, so far from being in any sense aggressive, is negative : it manifests itself in indifference. We find many among this class who, whilst they may be

<sup>1</sup> I have made it a point to talk with a good many, not highly educated, but intelligent men, engaged in industry, who were formerly what is called orthodox, but who have since become sceptical ; and I find that in nearly every case the individual does not attribute the change which has taken place in his mind to reading or conversation. As one of them expressed it to me : " It has come about by itself."

regular attendants at church, and even encourage their families in this habit, are themselves listless hearers, or, if they listen, are inclined to question in silence all mysteries which they do not understand, and all metaphysical propositions which they cannot themselves answer.

As preliminary to the further study of the influence of industrial surroundings upon the intellect of the industrial class, it is necessary briefly to trace the processes through which theology gradually began to lose its hold upon the popular mind and to be replaced by secular thought.

The metaphysical philosopher has never sought the popular audience. Working in the higher fields of secular thought—in the region of pure ideas and mental conceptions,—he places a higher estimate on the mental processes by which he supports his system. From the very character of his study he assumes an attitude of supremacy and isolation. His philosophy cultivates in him a lofty sense of indifference for physical influences, and a contempt for physical philosophy. This is the attitude which has characterized metaphysics from the time of Thales to the present day.

On the other hand, the study of metaphysics has never proved alluring to the popular mind. The habits of thought which are necessary to the metaphysician are acquired by long and patient discipline, and then only by minds endowed with subtlety. Such discipline to the ordinary mind is irksome, and such mental subtlety usually absent. Moreover, pure reasoning does not satisfy a man who is en-

gaged in constant physical activity. There is then no bond of union between the metaphysician and the industrial worker.

The relation which theology holds to the industrial classes in this respect, however, is entirely different. While the mental processes of the theologian, like those of the metaphysician, are above the common mind, the attitude of the masses to theology, and of theology to the masses, arises from the nature of the subject with which theology has to deal. Theology, in its fullest sway, assumed to reach and govern the whole of life and of conduct. Every act of man from birth to death furnished a motive for interference. As it was the other world, also, with which theology dealt, the affairs of this world were made subordinate. All things were regulated by those who were assumed to be possessed of the sacred power of announcing authoritative conclusions. These teachers assumed a sacred power to direct man's beliefs, or at least his profession of belief. The whole system was held together by compact organization, and supported by worship practised through elaborate rituals with ornate ceremonials. Whereas, in secular metaphysics, as we have seen, the masses were always indifferent to philosophic thought because they could not understand it; here in theology, under the influence of the emotions, the traditions, the ceremonials, and rituals, these same minds became imbued with a sense of reverence which served completely to hold them in mental and physical subjection.

## 12 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

So long as this continued, the field of active thought was occupied exclusively by theologians and metaphysicians. When conflicts arose between these, the scepticism which resulted had at first but slight effect upon the popular mind, except perhaps that the animosity engendered by dispute made the mass of men, who did not understand the definite causes, more passionate and partisan adherents of the Church.

Accordingly, we find from historical review, that the mental habit which prevailed during the period of highest ecclesiastical domination, whilst it encouraged intellectual astuteness and agility among the few, left the masses in the hopeless dependence of ignorance. For, so long as the theologians were most earnestly absorbed in the contemplation of transcendent thought, and could give their conclusions to the masses as sacred behests, so long was there discernible among these masses no disposition whatever to examine the conditions upon which they received the behests of faith from priest and state. The whole attitude of the people was one of acceptance, submission, and mental sloth. That there could be no general mental activity and no physical fruits from such conditions is only too obvious. All the splendid mental gymnastics which characterized secular philosophy taught nothing to the people: they bore no fruit. All the refined scholasticism of theology bore only the fruit of mental repression. Under the domination of a system which assumed absolute authority over the body and mind, there could be no foundation for industrial growth, since

the first condition of progressive industry is that he who is engaged in it shall think.<sup>1</sup>

At length came the Reformation. As the reformers denied the Pope's exclusive authority and set up the right of private judgment, there necessarily followed a limitation to their own claim for exclusive authority, and thus, some resort to persuasion became necessary in the reformer's methods. In the appeal of these reformers to human judgment, there was the first opening in the direction of individual thought ; and it is a significant fact of history that liberty had its beginning through rifts in oppression.

The immediate influence of the Reformers upon theology and upon secular philosophy was plain enough. The farther-reaching effects, however, were not so clear, even to the philosophers. Lord Bacon, beginning to avail himself of the new freedom, pointed out the salient features of the old oppression. In his *Novum Organum* and his *De Augmentis* he unhesitatingly charges the industrial paralysis which characterized the middle ages, to the influence of the Church, and vividly portrays the huge ecclesiastical system of Rome as an incubus to human progress. He not infrequently refers to theology in a general way as a troublesome adversary to philosophy, as obstructing the way of thought by

<sup>1</sup> There was, it is true, in spite of the repression, here and there an instance of inquiry into physical nature. Thus Roger Bacon, in the thirteenth century, made discoveries and inventions which, considering the age he lived in, seem wonderful ; but his magnificent labors gained for him only an imprisonment of fourteen years, and other marks of unremitting persecution during most of his life.



“superstition and blind and immoderate zeal for religion”; but he refrains from making any specific charge against the particular phase of theology which immediately environed him and which saturated his age. Whilst it could not be otherwise than that he should find himself sometimes hampered by scholastic dogma, the fruits of his own philosophy had not yet sufficiently grown to enable even him to discern their full sceptical import. Besides this, in the vitality of theologic power which prevailed when the *Organum* was conceived, Bacon could never have hoped for support or countenance from his contemporaries, if he had seen and set forth the possibility of a subsidence of theology in ratio to the growth and elaboration of his philosophy. We know now that a subsidence has taken place, and is taking place, as the result of the growth of the physical and mental fruits which are born of his philosophy. But even if he had conceived such a result, it is obvious that it would have been fatal to him to have hinted it. That he did not conceive it, there is ample evidence throughout his work. If, however, he did not place theology in subjection to his philosophy, he at least refused to recognize the subjection of his philosophy to theology. He therefore took what seems to have been the only available course: he sought to divide the two by so clear a line of separation that one should not in any manner trench upon the other. “If,” he said, towards the conclusion of his *De Augmentis*, “I shall proceed to speak of theology, I shall step out of the bark of human reason and enter into the ship of the Church,

which cannot, without the Divine compass, properly direct its course ; for which the stars of philosophy, which have hitherto shone on us so brilliantly, afford no light. On this subject, therefore, it is well that I keep silence.”<sup>1</sup> The expectation of such a separation was founded upon a vain hope. The division was a purely artificial one, and could not be maintained. The effort only shows that Bacon did not realize that an essentially progressive scepticism was what was actually set in motion by the Reformation and encouraged by his philosophy. Whilst he was ready enough to attribute the paralysis of the middle ages to the theologic system of Rome, he did not perceive that the theologic system which he himself supported, exerted in like manner, though in modified degree, a similar influence upon his own age and upon his own mind, and that it was the tendency of his own philosophy to produce fruits which should progressively illustrate this fact.

It was by very slow stages that “the new learning” put forth by Bacon made those inroads upon theologic thought which Bacon did not himself contemplate. Philosophy, stimulated to a greater freedom under the influence of physical science, gradually dropped the old characteristics which adhered to it as metaphysics, and clothed itself with those of physics. Henceforth, its tone was gradually modified from one of authority to one of persuasion. The old assumption of dictation began to be supplanted by the new effort to convince, until now philosophy is coming to rest its right of being in the

<sup>1</sup> *De Augmentis*, lib. ix., chap. i.

approval of the understanding and the experiences, not of the few, but of all men who will listen to it. Its findings are falling into harmony with the sequence of natural phenomena. All this marks a gradual change from the esoteric to the exoteric—from a tone of lofty indifference in metaphysics, and a tone of dogmatic authority in theology, to the democratic and persuasive tone of physical science. Moreover, this influence gradually widens and deepens as it progresses. The philosophy which in its metaphysical phase was so lofty and indifferent, and which in its theological phase held the masses in ignorant awe, as it becomes physical, recognizes in the common people efficient coadjutors, who furnish data from which thought is constructed, and who thus come into accord with the higher reasoning which it employs.

If we may take the present character and incidents of this movement as a means of forecasting its further direction, we may reasonably infer from both, a continuance and growth of the new relation which the philosopher has come to hold towards the individual and the mass. We may expect to find the philosopher becoming more and more impressed with the view that it is his office, not to create a system, but to make a correct interpretation and delineation of a dynamic movement—a movement in which the masses take a large and important part, and of which philosophy itself is one of the results. Naturally the new philosophy depends for recognition, not upon authority, as did the old philosophies, but upon explanation; not upon an assumed power to

rule the ignorant, as does theology, but upon the power to stimulate inquiry and convince the reason. The tendency of such a philosophy is to bring the philosopher into the closest relation with the masses of men, to establish and cement a union which has hitherto been ignored by the metaphysician and in part accomplished by the theologian only upon the condition of mental servitude.

In looking more particularly into the manner in which impersonal surroundings operate upon the minds of the industrial masses, we note the relative force of the influence of surroundings as contrasted with the power of mere abstract argument. It is not by syllogisms that their minds are most acted upon, but by their constantly seeing natural law in dynamic operation. It was the illusive character of the syllogism that greatly impressed Bacon's mind. "Of induction," he says, "the logicians seem to have taken no serious thought, but pass it by with slight notice and hasten to the formulæ of disputation. I, on the contrary, reject demonstration by syllogism as acting too confusedly and letting nature slip out of its hands."<sup>1</sup> The industrial mind inevitably draws reasons from those moving, although impersonal, forces by which the industrial classes gain their daily bread, rather than

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's Works, Spedding & Ellis edition, New York, 1869, vol. viii., page 41. Bacon further says: "The syllogism consists of propositions and words, and words are the tokens and signs of notions. Now, if the very notions of the mind be improperly and over-hastily abstracted from facts, vague, not sufficiently definite, faulty, in short, in many ways, the whole affair tumbles. I therefore reject the syllogism."

from those abstract reasonings which they but vaguely think of, and in which they can therefore feel but little interest. Unlike the metaphysician who estimates reasoning for its own sake as affording the highest exercise of the mind, these men of common mould are inclined to measure the value of reasoning by its relation to fact, and naturally grow into habits of mind which accord with such inclination. When the philosopher appeals to them, they discriminate in favor of that kind of philosophy which can "condescend to men of low estate," and against that kind which is foreign to their associations.

All history shows how little effect direct abstract argument of itself has had in disturbing the deeply rooted sentiments of man. Scepticism has in all ages had its periods of activity and decline.<sup>1</sup> As long as verbal argument upon abstract propositions was the sole means employed, even thinkers grew tired from time to time of fruitless thinking, and so discussions alternately excited interest and fell into neglect. Disputation among thinkers arose and declined throughout mediæval times pretty much as fashions did. Even after the Reformation, when discussion

<sup>1</sup> As early as the ninth century Bruno and Spinoza were anticipated by an Augustinian monk, Erigena, the instructor of Alfred the Great. He set forth in definite terms that "all authority not acknowledged by reason is seen to be weak ; but true reason rests on its own strength and has not need of confirmation by an authority," and "that we should not fear to declare the truth revealed by reason, even if it should seem contrary to the Bible." No bolder heresy than this was proclaimed for a thousand years after. *De Divisione Naturæ*, vol. i., pp. 66-69.

had grown presumably more free, the influence exerted by the higher minds upon the lower by means of intellectual wrangling was not at all commensurate with the efforts that were employed. Inductive scepticism at first fared little better than did the metaphysical, since, as far as the masses were concerned, the receptive mind was wanting.

In the eighteenth century sceptical discussion among scholars was particularly active, and it had numerous phases. Towards the latter part of the century it was intensified by the influence of the French Revolution. During this period Hume's *Essay on the Miracles* and Gibbon's sixteenth chapter of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* appeared. The former was regarded by the sceptical thinkers as a marvel of logic, and the latter as a marvel of scorn. But how could these affect the minds of common men who were ignorant of the higher mental processes and generally sealed against all scholarly argument? It is true Voltaire exerted an influence beyond the region of scholarship, but this I think was largely due, at least in England and America, to his manner of attack: as a rule men take more readily to wit and satire than they do to dry argument, and the caustic sayings of Voltaire became current among people who had never seen his works. In France his influence was more profound and general, partly because the Church, especially after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, allied itself with the State to press the common people through all the stages of wretchedness to desperation. Voltaire's keen satire served

to express the people's sense of retort. So, too, Paine's effort, which was philippic in character, doubtless intensified hatred in minds which dispassionate argument could not have reached. But it was the case with both Voltaire and Paine that the mass of men knew nothing of their writings, and their names were heard only when they were set up by the pulpit orator as men of straw, often to be challenged for what they did not say, and then relegated to the mercies of Satan. While sceptical and devout scholars contended with each other over the relative power of such arguments as Hume's *Essay on the Miracles* and Calvin's *Institutes*, their contests had no effect on the masses, who knew nothing of either *Essay* or *Institutes*. In point of fact, as arguments they were both unanswerable, and the only essential differences between them were differences of premise.

It was thus with all contests waged between the scholars of the Church and the sceptics. The most that can be said of the result is that such added scepticism as the contests produced was confined to scholars, the common people meanwhile generally continuing to accept the dogmas of the Church upon the authority of the Church, and to hold their faith. As to the body of the Church we find that, whereas metaphysicians have wrangled with it in all ages, and more recently Voltaire ridiculed it, Gibbon sneered at it, Paine railed at it, and Hume attacked it with logic, it receded but little from its claims. No degree of effort, from the nicest subtlety of reasoning to the utmost coarseness of abuse, from the

keenest refinement of wit to the grossest assault of scurrility, availed seriously to lessen the Church's sense of its own security. So long as it had only scoffers and dialecticians to contend with, it met the dialecticians with dialectics and the scoffers with sacred scorn.

But as the fruits of physical science grew, they became silent witnesses of natural law; the sceptical philosopher, employing them to illustrate his particular philosophy, gained a new audience in the world. Then theology began to suffer a process of disintegration and dissolution such as had never before been seen. These influences not only exerted themselves upon the outside, but reached into the very heart of the Church; a kind of erosion of creed set in, which moved the Church from its position of high authority to a point at which explanation, apology, and adaptation became necessary, and from this point to an attitude in which successive adaptations of creed are made as progressive physical science renders such adaptations imperative.

In thus dwelling upon the importance of this influence of industrial surroundings, I would not under-rate the correlative part which intellectual persuasion plays. It is not the power of intellectual persuasion, but of intellectual coercion, that is called into question. When we consider the relative qualities of influences, these surroundings are first. I infer the lesser value of the higher processes of philosophic thought in so far as these processes fail to persuade by failing to reach the common mind. I further infer the greater value of physical surroundings as



formative influences, because they lie first in the order of influences which directly stimulate the common mind, and thus make the intellectual progress of the masses possible. They furnish and make tolerable the mental discipline which this mind must undergo in order to reach a perception of principles. They supply the light by which principles are illustrated to minds otherwise incapable of realizing principles. It is through their agency that the masses began, at first imperceptibly, to move from that condition of mental stagnation in which the centuries preceding the Reformation had held them to a condition of mental activity. It is through them that these masses have gained a momentum of their own, until they have come to apprehend some, at least, of those progressive generalizations which physical science has made from the data furnished by the fruits of industry.

In view of these facts, when I state that mental growth results from this beginning, I simply state a law of mind; and, by considering the subject-matter with which the common mind has to deal, we may easily see how theology is affected. As the masses from their habitual associations acquire a habit of reasoning upon natural law, and thereby learn to appreciate the constant and simple operation of this law, they correspondingly tend to question those supernatural theories which formerly impressed them. In other words, their surroundings have opened their minds to the reception of a new species of argument, and of new lines of thought touching premises which they themselves did not

formerly question ; by assisting in the furnishing of material to the scientific philosopher, the masses have come under the persuasiveness of science ; and just to the extent that they are moved into harmony with natural law, they are moved out of harmony with the old supernatural apparitions.

However, then, we may regard the influences of these physical surroundings as affecting the higher planes of thought, their greater significance lies in the fact that they widen the area of spontaneous thought by reaching the industrial classes, and their greatest significance lies in the fact that the minds thus opened are impressed with a kind of philosophy in which inquiry supplants authority. The premises of this philosophy being natural and persuasive, are just the opposite of those of that philosophy which were commanded by authority to be taken without being understood. It need hardly be said that the influences of the former are progressive, whilst those of the latter are statical, since inquiry generates inquiry and grows by what it feeds on.

There is another feature of these physical surroundings which must not be overlooked : they influence the mind quietly. The great mass of men who have been taught to hold doubt in abhorrence, who formerly closed their ears to the reasonings of scepticism and could not in any way be driven to adopt heterodox views, have from one degree to another, by this unperceived but natural power, been led into that indifference which is the condition of abandonment of old ideals. Mental unconsciousness of the incongruity of their physical surround-

ings with theology was the primal condition in which the common mind permitted those influences to begin. The progress of the change was easy because there was no mental irritation accompanying it. Thus the result which direct intellectual appeal was of itself unable to accomplish came about from the impersonal influences which owe part of their momentum to the quietness with which they operated.

Here we have a great movement set in motion, not by verbal argument, but by the inanimate forces of Nature gradually uprooting and dissipating superstitions which were created by the higher intellect of man and which the higher intellect of man could not successfully overcome.

If it is a correct inference that the physical surroundings have been the initial cause of indifference, another inference is suggested. To the extent that these influences explain the gradual movement of the masses during the last thirty years, from unquestioning acceptance of theologic dogma, first to an indifference for that dogma, and thence to scepticism concerning it—to that extent the philosopher is obliged either to treat those causes upon which the progress of civilization essentially depends, as sinful, or else to forego the charge of depravity concerning so much of the disbelief as is necessarily identified with this progress. I only mention this in passing, as I shall have occasion more fully to consider it hereafter.

## CHAPTER II.

### INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIAL SURROUNDINGS (*Continued*).

I WILL now return to the examination of the impersonal influence of industrial surroundings for the purpose of illustrating how theology has been affected by the course of discovery and how by the course of invention. Modern science may be said, comprehensively, to be the product of discovery and invention. Between these it is necessary to make a distinction, both as to the constitution of each and as to the particular kind of influence which each exercises in the general dynamic movement. Discovery, as I shall employ the term, signifies strictly the ascertainment of a natural law and its workings, or of the working of a number of natural laws in their association with each other. Gravitation, the Copernican Hypothesis, the Laws of Kepler, the Laws of the Correlation of Force and Energy, are examples of discovery. Invention, as I shall employ the term, signifies the finding out and creation of those methods and mechanisms which are employed in the industrial arts. The steam-engine, the electric dynamo, and the electric telegraph are examples of invention. Whilst discovery primarily

extends the sphere of knowledge, it is invention that primarily increases the store of the physical resources. Keeping this distinction in view, let us look at the influence which the great discoveries exercised upon the minds of men with reference to theology, and, thereafter, at the more extended influence which the great inventions have thus exercised. For the purpose of this illustration I will very briefly note, in their order, the great astronomical discoveries which were made from the beginning of the sixteenth to the early part of the eighteenth centuries, and the attitude of each of the individual discoverers to his discovery as it bore upon theology.

The first great discovery after the Reformation was that of Copernicus, by which the hypothesis that bears his name supplanted the theory of Ptolemy. That Copernicus was thoroughly impressed with the theology of his age, and that he sought by all means to convince himself that there was no antagonism between his discovery and his theology, cannot be doubted. That the head of the Church itself did not at first perceive any such antagonism, is sufficiently shown by the fact that Copernicus was permitted to dedicate his work on *The Astronomical Bodies* to the Pope, and was assisted in its publication by an eminent prelate. Although thus fortified, Copernicus was not without apprehension of trouble from ecclesiastical prejudice, for in his dedication he says: "Should there be any babblers who, ignorant of all mathematics, presume to judge of these things on account of some passage of

Scriptures, wrest to their own purpose, and dare to blame and cavil at my work, I will not scruple to hold their judgment in contempt." But, whatever might have been his own convictions as to the harmony between his discovery and theology, the discovery itself had the effect of shaking the theologic sense of certainty with reference to some of those specific details of revelation which were before literally accepted. It suggested to thinking minds that the earth, which revolved around the sun as a satellite, lacked some of that consequence which theology had before attributed to it; that the superior magnitude and importance of the sun deranged somewhat the literal interpretation of those parts of Scripture from which the greater importance of the earth was inferred. A physical fact which threw a doubt upon the biblical account of the standing still of the sun upon Gibeon, and of the moon in the valley of Ajalon, and which therefore made such men as Luther and Bacon deny this hypothesis as heretical, could not be acceptable to theology generally.

The discoveries of Tycho Brahe followed those of Copernicus. He made a vast collection of observations, which laid the foundation for Kepler's discoveries of the laws bearing his name, and furnished Newton with material for his astronomical philosophy. Perhaps the greatest service which Tycho rendered to science was in his preparation of data for his successors. Although his astronomical method was entirely inductive, in all else he was under the influence of theology. No one has given

a clearer definition of what the inductive process is than he did when he advised Kepler to "first lay a solid foundation for his views by actual observation, and by ascending from these to strive to reach the cause of things"; but we must remember that owing to his veneration for the Church, he ignored this very rule when he rejected the Copernican Hypothesis and substituted one of his own which should fall into accord with theology. In his system, the earth is stationary in the centre of the universe, while the sun, with all the planets and comets surrounding it, performs a daily revolution around the earth.

Notwithstanding the progressive accessions which astronomy had thus far received from Copernicus and Tycho Brahe, no progress had yet been made in developing the general laws; nor had scarcely any idea been formed of that invisible power by which the planets were retained in their orbits. Copernicus and Tycho Brahe having prepared the material, however, Kepler followed to lay the foundation for the structure which Newton finally completed.

Kepler, at first disregarding the investigations of Tycho Brahe, endeavored to represent the hypothesis of uniform motion in circular orbits; but, upon carefully examining the orbit of Mars, he found the errors too great to be added to the observation; he therefore compared the observation to the other curves and found that Mars revolved around the sun in an elliptical orbit, in one of the foci of which the sun itself was placed. By means of the same observation he computed the dimensions of the planets' orbits, and, by comparing the times in which

Mars passed over different parts of it, he found that they were to one another as the areas described by the lines drawn from the centre of the planet to the centre of the sun. These two brilliant discoveries, the first ever made in physical astronomy, were extended to all the other planets of the system, and were given to the world in his *Commentaries on the Motions of the Planet Mars*, in 1609.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of theology over Kepler's mind is illustrated by the circumstance that when he discovered the laws of the motion of the planets around the sun in ellipse, being unable to find any physical reason for their continuance in their orbits, his theologic imagination set up a theory for the regularity of this motion by the assumption that each of the planets was accompanied by a presiding angel placed there by the Almighty for retaining it in its orbit. This continued to find favor and to be accepted until the time of Newton, as we shall presently see.

Next in order comes Galileo with the one great invention among the discoveries—the telescope. By means of this he discovered that Venus had the same crescent phases as the waxing and waning moon; that the sun had spots on its surface which proved that it moved on its axis; that Saturn was not round, but had handles attached to its disks; that Jupiter had more satellites than the earth; that the milky way consisted of a multitude of stars; that the sun was placed in the centre of the system

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton*. Sir David Brewster, Edinburgh, 1855. Vol. i., p. 266.



in the focus of the elliptical, or in the centre of the circle of the orbits of the planets, and, by some power yet to be discovered, guided them in their course; while the earth and Jupiter exercised the same influence over the satellites which accompanied them. With these progressive discoveries, the Church for the first time began to recognize the significance of the movement which had commenced with Copernicus. Galileo's work mainly consists in elaboration, extension, and specification. The largest import of his invention is that discoveries which he made with it furnished arguments in support of the hypothesis of Copernicus. He established that hypothesis by ocular evidence. It will stand forth as the great misfortune of the Church, that the pretension which characterizes ecclesiastical certainty was so decisively exerted against a physical fact just when the evidence of that fact became incontrovertible. The Church, confronted with ocular demonstration, still assumed the infallibility of its sense for interpreting revelation. With its assurance of infallibility it unequivocally condemned the discoverers. It proceeded, by means of the Inquisition, with an effort to annihilate the ocular demonstration which the telescope disclosed. I believe that the Roman Church to-day recognizes as true all of those specific facts for the assertion of which Galileo was declared to be a criminal. It has since then sought to adapt its interpretations of revelation to these facts; but it has never explained how its first condemnation of these truths as dangerous heresies can be consistent with the absolute certainty

by which it still assumes to hold all hidden truth. Indeed, there is nothing in history which so characterizes any theology as the ease with which it forgets its lapses into fallibility. This is the more significant when theology sets itself forth as a creator and preserver of all the essential qualities of civilization.

Sir Isaac Newton was preceded by a number of men who made important contributions towards the establishment of the true system of the planets. Among these were Hooke, Huygens, Wren, and Halley; but it is to Newton that we owe the demonstration of the great truth that the moon is kept in her orbit through the same power by which bodies fall on the earth's surface. From this he derived the greater discovery, which characterizes the *Principia*, namely, the principle of universal gravitation, "that every particle of matter in the universe is attracted by, or gravitates to, every other particle of matter, with a force inversely proportional to the squares of their distances,"—a truth which furnishes both a beautiful and a simple explanation of the motions and positions of the planets in their places. It was this explanation which supplanted the supernatural and theological theory of the influence of a presiding angel by which Kepler accounted for the regularity of orbital motion. But Newton was no less impressed with the theology of his time than were his predecessors, the only difference between him and them being that the theology which thus impressed him had in the meantime become somewhat modified.

Such is a very brief review of the labors of the

chief of those illustrious men who prepared the science of astronomy. Copernicus determined the form of the solar system; Tycho Brahe prepared the data for Kepler; Kepler discovered the laws which bear his name; Galileo added to the universe a whole system of secondary planets and new satellites, and thus prepared the data for Newton; and Newton established the law of universal gravitation governing and maintaining the whole planetary system.

Let us now contrast the impersonal influence of these discoveries with the personal attitude of the discoverers to them, in order that we may realize how much more profound and important were the impersonal influences of the discoveries upon theology than any of the discoverers themselves ever conceived them to be.

Copernicus was governed by a supreme wish to keep his discovery in harmony with the theology of his time. Whenever he felt any incongruity arising between his discoveries and the current theology, he became solicitous to reconcile the difference. As the theology of his time transcended in importance all else under its influence, he habitually and studiously directed his scientific course to allay theologic prejudice and avoid conflict. He committed his discovery by the slow current of communication to friendly critics within the Church.<sup>1</sup> The points of

<sup>1</sup> A cardinal and a bishop of the Church exerted all their influence to induce him to publish it, but he resisted their entreaties for three years, and finally arranged a plan for giving his discoveries to the world without alarming the vigilance of the Church.—*Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton*, by Sir David Brewster, vol. 1, p. 256.

opposition which it presented to the accepted doctrines were gradually thought to be adjusted, and they thus insinuated themselves into ecclesiastical minds.

We next come to Tycho. With him we find that it was his reverence for the Scriptures that forbade him to accept the Copernican Hypothesis and led him to set up one of his own in which the earth remained the centre of the universe. That the influence of his work far exceeded his own estimate of it, is clear from the fact that the value of these labors to posterity consists altogether in the data which he furnished to his successors, and by the employment of which they established beyond doubt the very hypothesis which he so reverently denied. He thus presents us with a notable case of a man who has misestimated and underestimated the most important influences resulting from his work.

The same may be said of Kepler. Wherever his efforts seemed to him to disturb theologic conceptions, his first thought was to seek a reconciliation by adapting himself as far as possible to his theology; and, high as was his estimate of his work, this estimate was limited by his theology.

A far more striking illustration of the inability of the discoverer to estimate the full scope of his work is afforded by Galileo's invention of the telescope, and by the discoveries which followed it. Notwithstanding the fact that with his telescope Galileo produced ocular demonstration by which conflicts between theologic conceptions and scientific fact became irrepressible, he was sedulous in his efforts

### 34 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

to convince the Church of the harmony of his work with theology.

The sympathies of mankind have been deeply moved by the spectacle history presents of Galileo at the age of seventy arraigned by the Inquisition, a repentant criminal kneeling before the assembled cardinals, laying his right hand on the holy evangel, invoking divine assistance in abjuring, and detesting, and vowing never again to teach the theory of the earth's motion and the sun's stability. But we must not forget that Galileo never regarded himself as a heretic, and that, if his mind was scientific, his nature was devout. He directed all his efforts towards reconciling his discoveries and inventions with the Scriptures. He bowed at last to the demands of the Inquisition, and lived the remainder of his life under this submission, giving his declining years to reverent devotion and penance.

Of Newton it may be said with equal truth that the influence which his discovery of universal gravitation exerted upon theology could not have been realized by him. Having accomplished his scientific work, he spent the rest of his life in writing upon theology, impressed with the desire to make the scientific work of his life harmonize with the theology of his time. To measure, therefore, the influence of Newton's scientific work by his own estimate of it, especially in its relations to theology, would be to ignore all subsequent history.

These discoverers themselves were not only disturbed by the necessity of squaring their discoveries to the unyielding demands of theology, but, when

they fancied they had accomplished something like harmony, they were continually harassed, persecuted, and anathematized for that which we now plainly see was the exercise of the highest quality of the human mental faculty. Each of these discoverers moved in a mist of theology from which he could not escape; but whilst each felt at times the repressive influences of this theology, not one wished to escape entirely from its sway. If each one moved toward the light, as indeed he did, he was never in the fulness of that light, and a man of ordinary capacity to-day may easily perceive how impossible it was for the most brilliant mind of any of the discoverers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to estimate the influence of his work upon the dissolution of theology.

I have thus indicated in detail the relation of the discoverer to his own discovery and his estimate of his work. The larger inference from this is that discovery, taken as a whole, and regarded as an impersonal influence, transcends not only the estimate of the immediate discoverer, but the estimate of the whole age in which that discoverer lived. If we look back from the date of the death of Newton (1727) to the beginning of the Reformation (1521)—two hundred and six years—we shall be able to note more clearly the influence of the progressive and cumulative movement of discovery upon theology, and shall realize that the fulness of this movement was unperceived by those immediately engaged in it. Within that period an enormous change had taken place in men's habit of thought—at least in the

habit of the men of higher thought. A perspective view shows us that each discoverer was influenced by the theologic restraints which belonged to his age, and we find that the whole movement is distinguished by the effort of the discoverer to adapt dynamic laws of Nature to the rigorous demands of theology; whilst this movement, impersonally considered, shows that it was not the isolated discovery, but successive and added discoveries, which affected the thinking minds of posterity far more than they affected the minds of the men of the age in which the discoveries were made.

If we would see how theologic thought was affected by the discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, considered as a progressive whole, we must turn from the discoverers to the philosophers. The discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo brought into being the philosophies of Descartes and Locke; and, as these discoveries were supplemented by the series which culminated in the recognition of the universal law of gravitation, a new broad basis was made for all the schools of philosophy which flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These philosophies proceeded to draw inferences from discovery which the discoverers themselves did not and could not draw. They pointed out specifically the inevitable antagonism between these discoveries and theology—the very antagonism which the discoverers themselves sought to avoid. They thus drew the true corollaries from discovery, and led thinking minds generally towards a more searching inquiry into natural law, and, corres-

pondingly, towards a greater modification of common preconceptions concerning supernatural intervention.

But, after all, these influences directly reached and greatly moved only the higher circles of thought and philosophy. The discoveries, in influencing philosophers, influenced only intellects which were capable of dealing with abstract principles and laws. To whatever consequences the discoveries and philosophies might ultimately lead, they were primarily regarded both by the discoverer and by the philosopher as contributions to knowledge, and certainly without any reference to the effect which they might have upon industrial art. Of course it will easily be seen that this does not imply any underestimate of the higher office of discovery and philosophy. It would be impossible to overestimate the value of the services to mankind rendered by the leaders of thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for they illustrate the highest achievement of which the human mind is capable ; but when we come to consider the movement of civilization as a whole, we must realize that this movement is not accomplished by discovery and philosophy alone—that the forces which most move the underlying mass, the many, are of the highest importance. In view of this, it seems to me that the greatest value which the discoverers and philosophers have rendered to the mass of mankind, lies less in that exhibition of superiority which so challenges the admiration of the world, than in the great indirect results of discovery which were totally unperceived by the discoverers themselves, and but partly appreciated by the philosophers.



The discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries marked the close of an era which was characterized by the supremacy of ecclesiasticism and militancy, and the dawn of another which was destined to exhibit the supremacy of free inquiry and industrialism. They marked the end of an era in which the exclusiveness of high thinking prevailed, and the beginning of another which was to be characterized by the diffusion of thought. The greatest import of their work lies in the fact that they began in specific instances to substitute mental persuasion for mental coercion, and thus to make a forward mental movement possible and general.

Obviously, then, the conditions of large mental activity were not fulfilled by discovery alone. Discovery laid the foundation for modern sceptical philosophy, and modern sceptical philosophy built upon this foundation. But it was only when invention reinforced discovery and philosophy that the minds of the masses became greatly aroused, and, thus aroused, moved towards intellectual freedom. If the discoverer and philosopher valued knowledge for its own sake, the inventor valued it first for its utility, its convenience, its profit, for the industrial use to which he could apply it. This is the first condition of universal interest in invention.<sup>1</sup> But, whilst invention thus first secured man's attention because it supplied his demand for utility, convenience, and profit, it necessarily exerted an influence

<sup>1</sup> So long as electricity was in exclusive possession of philosophers and scholars, it filled the common mind only with vague wonder; but when it moved from the experimental to the industrial field a knowledge of its laws became general.

upon him more far-reaching and profound, until its highest value is gradually coming to be realized as a means whereby the multitude are stimulated to thought. Invention has thus become the last and greatest contributor to progressive physical science, and to a philosophy which claims its own by coming "home to men's business and bosoms."

I have hitherto noticed the quietness with which impersonal surroundings have moved the mind of the discoverer and philosopher. In like manner they have moved the mind of the industrial actor and inventor. It is not in accordance with his specific wish that they influence his theology; they irresistibly affect it largely because they are impersonal; they displace pre-conceptions because they do not seem to have any relation with those pre-conceptions. As they influence the thinker, so they come in time to influence the man of lesser thought. They reach theologic conceptions through secular conceptions, and though working thus unperceived upon the mind, they nevertheless, by their influence, when examined, exhibit the relation of cause and effect. For, along with the change in secular surroundings, come inevitably, although gradually, changed convictions with reference to theologic conceptions. The movement is a persuasive one: it indicates the growth of a philosophy which shall no longer consist in intellectual dominance—exercised over ignorance by withholding knowledge or the processes by which knowledge is obtained, or by demanding allegiance to authority. This philosophy is characterized by a frankness and openness of knowledge which presup-

poses the entire freedom of inquiry; the subordination in the mind of those things which are not known to those which are; a spirit which leads instead of seeking to compel. We have here, then, in the force of invention, a reflex power exerted upon the mind of the inventor, upon the mind of the artisan, upon the minds of all who come directly or indirectly in contact with industry—an influence which leads from fact to law. The product of this philosophy is a coherent result, a unified knowledge, a homogeneity of mental conclusions. The influence of invention thus brings the teacher and the taught together; it makes the industrial actor a pupil of the philosopher, and the philosopher a pupil of the industrial actor. Among all the contributors there exists a bond of union, and so the greatest philosopher and the simplest artisan move in one direction by community of ideas. We realize in this philosophy a necessary relation between scepticism and the freedom of inquiry—between scepticism and the growth of knowledge. This freedom of inquiry, this scepticism, underlies progress. It is the influence, not only of the discoverer or of the inventor, but mainly of the things discovered and invented, which progressively stimulates inquiry into Nature's law and leads men's minds from a sense of awe for the unknown to investigation. In so far as this influence is essential to physical progress, in so far as it exhibits harmony with that progress, and leads the student to prefer the harmony of Nature to the inharmony of theology, it cannot be accounted as vicious. In so far as it produces a cast of mind in men which is consistent with

self-honesty and mental integrity, it must be accounted as virtuous. An influence which is so potent and progressive may be expected to lead man finally to subordinate dogmatic and supernatural teaching to persuasive and natural, and lead him to weigh evidence as the true means of forming judgment. Although it may be by imperceptible stages, this influence must at length remove from his mind all his sense of reverence for his ignorance. The place which personal authority will hold under such circumstances must necessarily be very much lower than any place it has hitherto held. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how anything like the old submission to authority can have any existence. Under this condition truth can have no added nor diminished value from mere personal relation to it. The most that the highest degree of wisdom can then attain, in teaching aught concerning the region beyond which knowledge reaches, can only be by suggestion, as suggestion falls into accord with known truth. Authority must then stand or fall by the value of its power to convince ; by the consistency of its statement with surroundings ; not by its coincidence with present knowledge only, but by its power to preserve symmetry with new facts and circumstances, as facts and circumstances are developed in the further progress of the world. Already it is obvious to the scientific observer that, by the logic of events, the assumption of the sacredness of authority has been modified, and that it will inevitably continue to be, unless something stops the progress of human improvement, until at last the sacred authority shall fail. The growing pressure of im-

personal surroundings progressively demonstrates new truths in harmony with known fact, and moves steadily upon the dogmas which have been derived from tradition and ignorance. Thus the sacredness of these dogmas is gradually fading, and with the fading of their sacredness their power to impress men's minds is disappearing.<sup>1</sup>

The sum of all those mental influences which have furnished whatever knowledge the world has gained, has been characterized by their secular quality. It was because they were secular and not sacred that they moved the mind ; for whenever in history an opportunity has been afforded for determining the relative value of a sacred tradition in its conflict with a secular fact, the supernatural conception has given way to the fact ; wherever relative truth has come into conflict with supramental dicta, in every case in which a decision has been reached the relative truth has set aside and taken the place of the supramental

<sup>1</sup> It is by this logic of events in secular life that the ultimate value of secular authority is measured. One may see this in the adjusting of authority which is continually taking place in our courts of justice. The higher reasoning faculty of the court comes to analyze a given set of important facts constituting a cause. The decision stands binding upon lower tribunals, legislatures, and the people, until by the force of events new facts are created in the development of industry which change the value of the authority. Exceptions multiply in the application of the rule more rapidly than instances, until the exceptions become overwhelming, when the rule fails and a new authority, adaptable to new conditions, takes its place. Industry proceeds under the new authority until new facts illustrate a necessity for a still newer adaptation. It is thus that the logic of events deals not only with courts, but in a larger sense with all man-made constitutions and political structures. It is thus, too, that it deals with the ecclesiastical authority.

assumption. In the law of parsimony there is no exception. Nature never takes both an extraordinary and an ordinary means of accomplishing the same end. The law of parsimony is not a provisional or temporary law, but one of universal operation. It is to this law that theology at last, however reluctantly, yields. As sacredness has no proper part in the processes by which these influences operate upon the mind, it has also no legitimate place in the conclusions which science finally reaches. When a fact has passed through its stage of hypothesis, and falls finally into its place in the great storehouse of knowledge, no priestess guards it, no charge of depravity or moral defect lies against any one who chooses to deny it ; for the acceptance or refusal of any proposition of science is open to every man, and no imputation of guilt or spiritual loss is involved in either acceptance or denial. If any one does not believe, his refusal or incapacity does not make him a miscreant in the opprobrious sense of the word. He stands under no threat of present or future punishment from supernatural or temporal wrath. If his denial concerns some scientific fact less generally recognized, such as natural selection, all that can be charged against him is that he has either not adequately studied the subject or that his refusal to accept the demonstration of it argues an erratic mind. If his denial concerns facts that are well-nigh universally accepted, such as the law of gravitation, the most that can be said of him is that he is ignorant. But the impersonal law makes no appeal to the religious faculty. It is altogether irrelevant,

so far as concerns verity, whether a fact or conclusion which science suggests pleases or disappoints the searcher. Yet for all this, these impersonal influences are such that by their inherent persuasion they move men's minds to conviction.

Science thus brings her gifts of knowledge. She has weighed, scrutinized, doubted, and tested them, until they have fallen into harmony with all the antecedent facts of life, and thus they have become the common possessions of mankind, constituting a permanent addition to the already acquired products. There they are ruled by no schools, nor are they affected by any caprices; they stand by force of laws which never forget themselves, which never deviate from fixed lines or directions.

Theology, on the other hand, brings her gifts mainly the results of the emotions and aspirations; she seeks to define the indefinable; she does not court examination, but avoids it; she has asserted her authority over all the phenomena of life, until science, where science could reach her data and test them, has shaken that authority. To this extent she has silently sought to change and adapt her dogma to secular knowledge; meanwhile, within the region beyond that which examination can reach, she manifests the same assumption of authority.

The large question which confronts us, whether we will or not, is this: To which of these shall we look for the truths of life which we are capable of reaching? Shall we follow science step by step through knowledge to that line which marks the limit of the human mind, and, dealing with those

things which can be known, employ them as a means of progress in thought and knowledge; or shall we follow theology, which, seeking by ærial flight to go beyond that line, brings back ideals, and clothes these ideals with sacredness? As it is one of the fatal weaknesses of theology to assume the supernatural and personal guidance of all natural and inanimate things, we cannot expect that the question will receive any answer from the theologian so long as answer may be averted. But history answers this much: The general influence of surroundings is not a matter of choice or opinion, but a fact of historical development. The products of invention are about us everywhere. These products exert a continuous power of some kind; they move man generally in a way which direct reasoning or individual wish can do little to further or restrain. That this power is more potent than dialectic reasoning upon the ordinary mind there is every evidence, to the inductive philosopher at least, from the manner in which the common mind develops under it. It stimulates the common mind towards a kind of thought by which the stores of physical fact and knowledge are increased, and by which a recognition of natural law and a spirit of inquiry are encouraged.

The scientific philosopher here realizes that man has, in gaining physical power, not created it. He observes that gravitation held the worlds in their orbits; that light, heat, electricity, and motion were convertible and correlated forces, and that steam was expansive, long before man came upon the earth. Thus this philosophy teaches him that it is



46 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

man himself who has been tardy, and it associates theology with this tardiness; that it is man himself who vaingloriously assumed that the imagination must dominate all things, and in so doing has repressed his own inquiring sense and failed to realize the force of facts and laws which lie all about him; that man has been moved slowly from step to step, urged mainly by a kind of *vis a tergo*, pressed by circumstances; and that, when he first permitted himself to inquire, it was more through a wish to procure convenience than from what Bacon calls "the incomparable pleasure of standing on the vantage ground of truth." But this same philosophy finds also that man, having once accepted the conditions of inquiry, has moved forward towards inquiry of a larger and more comprehensive sort, and that, just as the forces of Nature came to be studied by him, these forces themselves influenced him concerning more things than physical want or convenience. They became to him teachers by which he was directed from fact to law—taught the constancy of law—and by inference from this constancy taught to displace superstition and mystery by natural law and simplicity. The quietness by which these forces exerted themselves was the prime condition by which they began to influence men's minds.

By taking a general survey, from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day, we may discern two sets of allied forces which have maintained an unremitting conflict. These may be designated as militancy and ecclesiasticism on the one hand, and

industrialism and secularism on the other. Always accompanying a condition of militancy there is a suppression of individuality, since efficient military movement depends upon the solidarity of the masses and of the subjection of these masses to command. Intellectual independence or individuality under such circumstances is confined to the few leaders, and the highest virtue of the great mass is the virtue of unquestioning obedience. The relative value of the strength of nations is here measured by the capacity of each nation to control the masses through the supreme will of the leader. In militancy, industry is of secondary importance, since its chief value consists in furnishing means for securing militant supremacy. Analogous to this are the characteristics of ecclesiasticism. Obedience to authority is explicit here also, and the repression of intellectual individuality inevitable. Militancy and ecclesiasticism are then harmonious powers. They cultivate the same class of virtues—obedience and loyalty to the command of superiors. They alike reprehend and repress individual independence and industrial activity. Industrialism, on the other hand, is characterized by spontaneous mental action; by individuality of movement; by the strengthening of the middle classes by means of new mental impulse which these classes have received. This spontaneous mental action, this individuality of movement, this revival of the impulse of the middle classes, constitute together the characteristics of secularism, and so secularism and industrialism are allied forces. Under the conditions which accompany these forces,

implicit obedience ceases to be a virtue. Individuality of conviction, independence of thought and action, become virtues instead. Leadership has lost its absoluteness; authority has failed; spontaneous action is born of persuasion.

Now, if we study the struggle for ascendancy going on between the two sets of allied forces, we shall find that the gradual decline in the militant and ecclesiastical spirit is coincident with the gradual growth of the industrial and secular spirit. We shall note, moreover, that industrialism and secularism as they have progressed have been reinforced by the physical products of science. It cannot be supposed that forces which thus gain ascendancy as they proceed will stop at any stage short of complete ascendancy. The hope of the theologian to make any final adaptation of theology which shall enable theology to remain permanently in such adaptation, must therefore be illusive.

## CHAPTER III.

### INTUITION.

**A**LL thinking men agree that there is a power beyond us which mundane experiences in themselves do not enable us to define. We realize that human reason is utterly impotent to furnish any other attributes of this power than those which can be inferred from the operation of natural law. If, then, we are to ascertain any of its other attributes, we must have a different means of reaching the truth concerning them than any afforded by reason or experience. If we have no such means, the inevitable result is that we must be content with such relative truths as we can reach through reason and experience.

As the human mind nears the limit of its reasoning capacity its difficulties increase, since those ideals which are beyond reason must inevitably, in passing through the mind, either be modified by reason or interfere with its exercise, for it is impossible to conceive of contemplation in which the reason does not act or is not acted upon. Nevertheless, it is a postulate of metaphysics that there is an original sense in man which is above reason, and to which reason, being inferior, must submit. This sense the

metaphysician variously calls "intuition," "consciousness," and "inner consciousness." Similarly it is a postulate of theology that there is an original sense in man which transcends the reason and to which the reason must reverently submit. With the theologian this is the sense through which ineffable impressions of a divinity are assumed to be derived, and it is variously called "the spiritual sense," "spiritual insight," and "Divine guidance." I shall hereafter employ, as indicating the metaphysical designation, the term "consciousness," and, as indicating the theological, the term "spiritual sense." In the province where the consciousness and the spiritual sense are assumed to prevail over common sense and human experience, the metaphysicians and the theologians claim exclusive command.

I shall endeavor briefly first to indicate the quality of metaphysics, by studying the behavior of metaphysicians towards it, and second, the quality of theology, by studying the behavior towards it of theologians. Thereafter I shall seek to study the influence of modern physical science upon both metaphysics and theology, and finally, by means of historical illustration, I shall endeavor to test the value of the theory by which the theologian sets up what he assumes to be a spiritual sense, as a power separate from, independent of and dominant over, the reason.

Following this order I hope to make it apparent that the actual behavior of consciousness, as it is exhibited in individuals, determines that the feelings and the reason are co-ordinate phases of mind, some-

what as light and heat are co-ordinate phases of force; that in the normal mind consciousness operates by a necessary consentaneity of all these phases and not by any arbitrary domination of one phase over another. The efforts of the metaphysicians to determine the attributes of consciousness by introspection have been constant and unwearying from the beginning of thought. No effort has been marked by so much elaborate and constant endeavor as has the effort, through subjective study, to arrive at a definite mental conception of consciousness and its office. No effort has been followed by such failure as has the effort of the metaphysicians to make their conclusions harmonize with natural phenomena. So far as they claim to find the genesis of thought by introspection, I shall not seek to refute them by any counter-effort at finding such genesis; but, conceding for the sake of examination that something like such a genesis has been found, I shall endeavor to test the qualities and attributes which the metaphysicians have assumed for consciousness, by showing its behavior in cases drawn from individual and class experience. By this course I make my appeal from the theory of the metaphysician to the practical effects and consequences of that theory.

If the teachings of the different metaphysical schools of the world have tended towards the establishment of a unity of conception concerning that which they call ultimate truth, or if they collectively have succeeded in making an appeal to human consciousness, an authoritative means for securing a

coherence of conceptions, they have been thoroughly misrepresented by history. Every such authoritative effort has failed. From the time of the first metaphysician to Mansel there has been no sign of coherence in the teachings of the different schools. Every metaphysician, as a disciple of some school or system, has shown a far greater tendency to divide metaphysics into new schools than to coalesce with old ones. There has been nothing like an attempt, by a federation of schools, to garner the high postulates of metaphysics in order thereby to impart to them even a partial harmony. There has, on the other hand, been a constant tendency to divergence of thought concerning ideals—a tendency expressing itself by divisions into new schools, thus presenting to the world a heterogeneous mass of refined distinctions. When metaphysicians were most numerous and active in Athens the divisions were most common. There were scores of schools during the age of Pericles which sprang from prior schools and systems; and it is doubtful whether there was one instance in which a school, having once started, ever again sought to modify its premises so as to bring it into unity with the school from which it sprang. This tendency toward division bears that relation to cause and effect which characterizes natural law. I dwell upon the importance of this fact because, in my opinion, it emphasizes the great and pregnant law of natural endowment.

I shall here only briefly notice this diversity of natural endowment, as it relates to metaphysics,

and postpone the more specific consideration of it until I take up the case of theology.

Diversity and variety of intellectual faculty, such as we invariably see when we compare or contrast any one mind with another, is not a transient incident, but an immanent condition. The higher the mental capacity Nature can confer, and the more complex she can make the mental structure, the more certain is she to produce unlikeness of one mind to another; and hence the more ethereal the subject of thought which comes to different minds, the greater the variety in the results of the aggregate thought; and the higher the thinking, the more necessarily tenuous will be the thought, and therefore, as the products of different minds, the more certain will such thoughts resist unification. It cannot be adventitious that Nature has furnished each man born into the world with faculties which are different from the faculties of others, and that, by reason of this difference, different men are enabled to entertain different ideals, and to reason with different degrees of strength or clearness. Nature assuredly meant something by the persistency with which she has done this throughout all known time, and part at least of her meaning may, I think, be inferred from actual consequences. She meant that variety of endowment should produce variety of result. She meant that only by the free exercise of her various gifts could complete freedom of thought and resultant truth be given to the world; and that coercion by one mind, or a number of minds, exercised upon others, could not have the



#### 54 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

effect of stimulating the variety with which the different minds were endowed. She meant to distinguish between coercion and persuasion, and to make the latter a prime condition of universal mental activity. It would indeed be impossible for us to conceive of a civilization devoid of mental individuality. When we investigate any influence which tends towards mental uniformity and seek its effect in history, we find a constant relation between mental activity, progress, and freedom, and the degree in which the law of diversity of faculty is permitted to operate. Seeing, then, that every effort made by the higher mind over the common mind, through the exercise of authority, has been characterized by repression of thought, we may infer that Nature did not intend that the diversity of faculty should be thus artificially interfered with. When we consider the operation of this law among the higher minds, we find that by its impersonal persistency it affords sufficient explanation of the fact that diversity prevents uniformity of ideal postulates, and that the very assertion of metaphysics that the truth is supramental is negatived by the failure of every effort of the metaphysician to impart universality or unanimity to it. Bearing in mind this law we easily realize how the metaphysician's ideal postulate is necessarily characterized by his own individuality. It is essentially a declaration of his sensibilities, of the consensus of his emotional and reasoning faculties, and by just so many shades of difference as lie between this consensus and that of another being, by so many shades will this postulate

differ from that of another. When the metaphysician sets up his postulate, his work thereafter consists in refining dialectics to support it. The peculiar dignity and superiority which he attributes to it are not derived from any test to which it has been put, but from the fact that it is assumed to be above such test.

What bond of union is there, or can there be, between this metaphysician's postulate and that of another? What is the likelihood of accord between two highly wrought and cultivated metaphysicians, as postulate makers, when each feels himself free to make postulates which the reason of the other may not challenge, and what possible tendency can there be towards accord between postulates thus made? As one metaphysician does not feel himself bound to accept the precise ultimate ideal of another, and does feel himself entitled, from his own personality, to make his own ideals and to clothe them with such attributes as he likes, the inner sense by which he does this makes compromise or accord impossible. All there is or can be in common between these minds is that accidental and partial similarity which comes from occasional coincidence of feeling, and instances of this become rare just in the degree that sensibilities are cultivated, acute, and free to act. In such ratio, then, as there is a freedom of thought among metaphysicians there will be differences of ideals and conflicts in the assumptions of authority for these ideals, and anything like ultimate unity between different metaphysicians concerning ideals never did and never can take place where human

freedom prevails. Nor does this diversity come from mere caprice in the metaphysician to resent or to refuse compromise; it inheres in the tenuity of the ideals themselves. The ideals are efforts at the expression and description of what are at best but shades of individual feeling. They are efforts of the mind to reach beyond the mind—efforts to express supramental things in terms of the Infinite, the Unconditioned, the Absolute, and therefore efforts of different minds which cannot convey mental pictures that harmonize. Even if we were to suppose that some individuals might in some mysterious way receive illumination beyond their mental faculties, the difficulty would not be in the least lessened; the expressions of such illumination would still be limited by human language; they would still have in some inconceivable way to be conveyed to other human minds than those possessed of the illumination. By the very nature of the law of diversity and from the necessary limits of the human mind, all efforts at such mental unity are vain. To describe the indescribable, to define the indefinable, to condition the unconditioned, can never by any possibility come to be an accomplishment of man.

Regarding these mental varieties as actual, palpable facts, we are led more specifically to ask what quality of the human mind is most appealed to when the metaphysician by reasoning makes reason secondary, and what must be the quality which is set up in the place of reason? What is it that makes one metaphysician assume to rise above his reason in adopting a set of ultimate postulates, whilst

another, setting out with a like assumption, adopts an entirely different set? The act of adoption is necessarily one of choice or preference, and it must come either from natural preference or from supernatural insight. If supernatural, may we not fairly expect it to be so superior a force, and so dominating mental action, as necessarily to produce mental acquiescence and preserve objective unity and consistency? Yet, as I have said, such unity and consistency do not appear in actual experience.

To attribute the difference between ideals to the imperfect character of the minds which conceive them, is of course to concede everything; since, whatever a supreme truth might have been in entering the mind, if it has deteriorated in coming through, it has ceased to be a supreme truth. On the other hand, if we regard the power which is assumed to impress men with ultimate truth as a natural mental power, the difficulty remains the same. In either case we are compelled to recognize the means by which we seek all truth, and especially supersensual truth, as inevitably affected by the preferences and feeling of the individual through whom the deliverance comes. This being so, we have the origin of metaphysics in the ideal-forming disposition—in the supremacy of the individual feelings, the supremacy of the undiscriminated emotions.<sup>1</sup> And this is confirmed by the attitude

<sup>1</sup> "The having an idea, and the not having it, are distinguished by the existence or non-existence of a certain feeling. To have an idea, and the feeling of that idea, are not two things; they are one and the same thing. To feel an idea, and to be conscious of

of every metaphysician towards his own particular phase of metaphysics or the metaphysics of his own particular school, as contradistinguished from his attitude towards the various phases of the metaphysics of others or of other schools than his own. This difference of attitude contradicts his broad claim for the worth of "consciousness" as expressing an innate sense as a separate entity through which objective supersensual truth is conveyed. When, therefore, the metaphysician says that consciousness affords the highest means for reaching sublime truth, he cannot possibly mean that the faculty of consciousness, objectively considered (that is, by its behavior in all minds), does this. What his statement really does import (although he may not intend it), is that his own individual consciousness, or at most the consciousnesses of the members of his immediate school, individual and aggregated, furnish the means by which his own ideal of supreme truth is reached, and that his individual consciousness, or at most the individual consciousnesses of the few who agree with him, not only discover supreme truth for him and his associates—not only enable him and these associates to select supreme truth—but authorize him and them to set the finding thus made against that of every other school, with the purpose of counteracting and defeating the findings of all consciousnesses which do not accord with his and that of his associates. It is he that feeling, are not two things; the feeling and the consciousness are but two names for the same thing. In the very word feeling all that is implied in the word consciousness is involved."—*Analysis of the Human Mind*, James Mill, vol. i., p. 272.

himself, then, who by his practice constantly ignores the force of his precept. It is he, who, having set up a rule, betrays his whole relation to that rule by furnishing an exception to it. It is he who destroys the whole value to himself of the principle which he assumes to sustain, by acting as if a principle could exist only for him and for those who agree with him, and not for others, and yet be a universal principle.

When we come to divest our minds of all other considerations, and study the theory of the metaphysicians in the light of their practice, we find a confusion and a contradiction utterly irreconcilable with the unity of truth, and as a result intellectual motion without progress. It was this that led Bacon to charge that the metaphysicians moved in circles and bore no fruit, that they delayed and discouraged mental and physical advancement. Whilst it would of course be rash to make a sweeping denial of the utter uselessness of metaphysics, I think this charge may with all propriety be made against what is particularly called pure metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> Whatever contributions have been made to the world's store of knowledge from the metaphysicians' side, have undoubtedly been due to the incidental element imported into metaphysics by criticism—an element which has, by the test of induction, caused a constant

<sup>1</sup> It will be obvious enough from reading other parts of my book that I do not mean to under-rate the value of the deductive faculty; it is from the imagination that our hypotheses are derived, and the importance of this faculty in promoting knowledge can therefore not be questioned; but the imagination becomes an agent for knowledge only when its products are submitted to test, and fall into accord with existing knowledge.

modification of the metaphysicians' deductions. Metaphysicians may therefore be said to be better iconoclasts than builders. Each, in creating his own system, has employed his unrestrained emotions, whilst in attacking the systems of others he has employed his judgment and his critical faculties. It was only when the different schools were led to employ fact and experience against the ideals of other schools—when they were compelled to appeal from the intense emotions to the reason—that they themselves were taught the necessity of modifying their assumptions of emotional supremacy.

In general it was the variety and conflict which grew out of individual freedom in the realm of the emotions that induced the members of the different schools to seek other than emotional means for counteracting the assumptions of opposing schools. Saying this I think I indicate the whole reason for whatever small degree of progress metaphysics as a body has shown since the days of Socrates. It has moved along slowly and solely by reason of the appeals which different metaphysicians from time to time have made from the assumption of super-reason to the persuasion of human reason. It may therefore broadly be said that the advantage which the metaphysics of each age has gained over that of preceding ages can be measured by the influence which scientific surroundings and inductive thought have exerted upon the minds of the metaphysicians.

I have thus briefly sought to show the relation which metaphysicians have held towards each other and towards metaphysics generally. I will now even

more briefly advert to the attitude which the metaphysicians hold towards the non-metaphysicians, or the outside world. The metaphysicians may be said to assume to make the conclusions of metaphysics a kind of mental necessity for the mass of mankind, not for the purpose of encouraging thought among this mass, but solely as a means of furnishing authority, whose influence is to discourage thinking. The whole attitude of metaphysics and the metaphysician towards the mass of men partakes also of the same inconsistency and incongruity as that which the metaphysicians and the several systems of metaphysics present towards each other. The assumed authoritative conclusions of metaphysics which are furnished to the masses come not from one source, but from many and diverse sources, and they are proportionately conflicting. So far as conclusions must be accepted by the mass of men without reasoning upon them, the acceptance simply leads to mental confusion, as the dictation of conflicting teachers necessarily must ; such confusion cannot impart certainty to the mind or conduce to progress. It is therefore not from minds given to the higher thought that the common mind of the world derives its motives for action ; and as this common mind is an important factor in all progress, those things which stimulate its activity are correspondingly important.

I have only touched upon that part which metaphysics plays in the world of thought, as preliminary to what seems to me a study of far more consequence. If metaphysicians have wrestled with each other by



refining thought and splitting hairs, and if the sum of their thinking has affected the common classes injuriously, theology and the theologians have immensely magnified this influence.

Employing metaphysics and the metaphysician for purposes of analogy, I shall now proceed to examine somewhat more particularly the relation of the theologian to theology and the relation of theology to the world in general.

What I have hitherto said of the metaphysicians, I may again say with emphasis of the theologians. If the work of the different theologians has tended towards the establishment of consistency in that which theologians all claim to be in the custody of theology, they have been thoroughly misrepresented in history, and such misrepresentation is of far more serious consequence in the case of theology than in that of metaphysics; for, if metaphysics assumes the attitude of authority towards the masses, it is at most secular authority; if it entertains contempt for those who cannot skilfully think and who refuse to accept authority, it at least leaves to the unthinking the privilege of indifference to its contempt; but theology means to permit no such indifference. Its authority is intended to be vastly more searching and coercive. If it cannot induce with promises of reward, it aims to compel with threats of torture.

That a larger degree of uniformity of belief has existed in theology than in metaphysics has been due, not to the greater persuasiveness or reasonableness of the premises of the one as compared with the other, but to the greater power of coercion—to the

more determined, constant, and universal efforts at sophistication by theology; to the intimacy of theology in its assumed relation to every individual; to its pretensions of control over every man's conduct from birth to death, and of his condition afterward; to the assumption of the sacredness of its behests and to its ability through association with the powers of the State to impress its claims. The general purpose of theology has therefore been universal.

If we turn from the contemplation of this arrogation of power, to the character of the theologic premises, and contrast them with those of metaphysics, we shall find the premises of theology vastly more sublimated. In metaphysics premises have no aura of sacredness; in theology they are assumed to be the revelations of a divinity—the direct impresses from heaven through a spiritual sense. The one thing common to all theologies is this assumption of such revelation—the assumption that there is a capacity for grasping the infinite, mysteriously given to the emotional nature and not afforded to the finite mind; that there rests an obligation on some power above us to lift the veil, not to an intellect, but to a sacred feeling which is assumed to act beyond the reach of the intellect. Theology, in short, assumes to select the particular agents who are to be nearest the veil, who are to be mysteriously impressed with what is behind that veil, who are to feel that which to the common mind is imperceptible, indescribable, infinite, who are to derive from this feeling an appreciation of truth transcending the imagination, and

who are thereby to be able to furnish to the common mind a means by which, in one degree or another, the ineffable can be appropriated. Thus theology intensifies the feelings, far above any point which metaphysics seeks to reach, by clothing them with the garb of holiness.

But whilst this is held by all theologians concerning theology generally, yet the moment the individual theologian begins his effort to support his own immediate view of theology, he inevitably contradicts his theory; for what is his invariable behavior towards theology in general as expressed by his specific acts? It is that, as he begins impressing upon the minds of the masses the specific product of his spiritual sense, he impresses something which the theologian of another sect contradicts with the specific product of another spiritual sense. The spiritual sense of the Romanist leads him to teach hagiolatry. This is, to his sense, just as well founded as any dogma of his creed; but what respect has a Protestant for this product of the spiritual sense? It appears simply as a degrading superstition. Similarly if we were to ask any Protestant what value the Pope's claim for infallibility has to him or his church, he would probably tell us it is a vain assumption.

Theologians can easily agree as to the value of theologies not their own. Thus all modern theologians will doubtless vary but little in their estimate of the value of any assumption of spiritual sense that the theologians of ancient Greece or Rome may have had. The modern Roman, the Protestant, the

modern Greek, may be expected to be of one mind on this subject ; nor would there be likely to appear to these theologians the least incongruity in the circumstance that their very methods of reasoning—the dialectics by which modern theology seeks to support its highest claims—are borrowed from ancient Greece, where they were used to support the mythologies then in vogue.

But whilst such unanimity exists with reference to extinct theologies, among those not extinct, theologians of the different sects invariably exhibit antagonism as to the apperceptions of an assumed spiritual sense ; hence it must be plain that theologians, whatever their claims, do not in practice deal with the spiritual sense as involving a principle for the ascertainment of truth. When each theologian determines that, in every theology but his own, the spiritual sense is an unwarranted assumption, he thereby inevitably overthrows the authority of his own spiritual sense as an objective thing, and negatives it as a means for ascertaining objective, ultimate verity. Though the theologian may close his eyes to this sequitur, the secular student cannot ; for how can he conclude that any sense is supreme over reason when he comes to judge such a sense from the variety of its fruits ? What must be his conclusions when he sees a creed, formed from what the Jew calls a spiritual sense, treated as abominable by the Greek, or a creed similarly formed by the Greek, treated as abominable by the Jew ; when he sees that a specific set of beliefs and practices, assumed to be sanctioned by the spiritual sense of the Romanist,

are abominable to the Protestant, and that a modified creed which is assumed to be sanctified by the spiritual sense of the Protestant is determined by the spiritual sense of the Romanist to be heresy?

The tendency which manifests itself so persistently in certifying to each individual the superiority of his particular body of faith, and prompting him, in one degree or another, to discredit all other dogma, is, I take it, the result of a law which points towards the progressive diversification of all specific creed. I have hitherto, in discussing metaphysics, called attention to this tendency as exhibiting Nature's law of the distribution of faculty. I regard this law as of transcendent importance, because I believe that in the complete recognition of it, will be found an unanswerable argument against all the theologian's claims for an ultramental and superior sense, against all hope for ultimate unity of creed, and in favor of a belief in the ultimate diversity and variety of all ideals. I believe, moreover, that the full recognition of this law will furnish ample justification for the largest freedom of thought, and especially for the condemnation of all restriction of thought concerning supersensual things. My proposition is that the tendency of Nature to differentiate faculty in conferring it upon different individuals is so persistent as to give it all the qualities of an universal and an invariable law. I am quite aware that what is called the law of heredity has occupied more attention and been generally more impressive. In looked-for likenesses we are apt to underrate the extent of difference. This is partly due, doubtless, to the fact that

the reproduction of characteristics gratifies a very common fancy in man. There is usually nothing that a father more loves to believe than that his own qualities, whatever they are, are exactly reproduced in a favorite son. Thus pleased with a general likeness, he is apt to exaggerate it so as to ignore the underlying shades of difference, which may, and often do, develop into radical divergencies. The general tendency has always been to infer a disposition of Nature towards the repetition of existing qualities. Particularly has it been the effort of students of heredity to emphasize this disposition. Starting with the recognition of man's instinctive desire to reproduce himself, they infer that an instinct so common and which so comports with parental vanity, must of itself stimulate Nature to gratify it. In their search for proofs of this tendency they are apt to treat instances in which such a partial likeness occurs (and all likenesses which Nature produces in human faculty are but partial) as the evidence of a paramount disposition on the part of Nature to overcome differences. On the other hand, when a specific difference is forced upon their attention, they are inclined to regard it as an exception to the law. Instances of atavism are treated as efforts of Nature to overcome hidden obstacles in the way of her progressive efforts towards exact reproduction.

When we come to compare or contrast the law of diversity with that of heredity in a general way, we shall find the former universal, whilst the latter is limited in its operation; the law of heredity does

not furnish one complete exception to the law of diversity, but only instances of modification. Underlying every instance of the law of likeness there is an instance of the law of diversity; for, whilst some faculties in different persons are reproduced with something akin to likeness, there is nowhere a reproduction of complete likeness. The tenacity of Nature in distributing this variety is quite as pronounced among the higher as among the lower classes, notwithstanding the constant effort among the higher classes, through careful family selection, to preserve trait and likeness. Where all is done that can be done to prepare for the coming heir and to secure likeness, Nature always furnishes differences, and often marked and disappointing differences. The relative potentiality of the law of heredity and of the law of diversity can be deduced only from the historical behavior of each; and this behavior warrants our conclusion that, whilst we may admit a general tendency in Nature towards the preservation of class and of race distinction, yet, when she produces an individual of whatever class or race, she puts an impress upon him different from that which she puts upon any other individual, and that she does this without exception. We may infer, therefore, that her preservation of class or race likeness is of secondary importance to her universal preservation of individuality.

In considering the extent of these two laws, we find that all heredity can truly teach is that Nature sometimes produces partial likenesses, whilst the law of diversity as truly teaches us that Nature always

furnishes differences; she never produces two individuals with faculties which are exactly alike, and she generally produces pronounced varieties. Behind and over and beyond all Nature's efforts at producing likeness between some individuals, is visible her larger and universal effort in producing unlikeness between all individuals. This, then, expresses Nature's universal law of the distribution and diversity of human faculty. It is true that the persistent and universal variation becomes appreciable to us only through the behavior of the law as shown in results; that many of the more subtle means which Nature employs to accomplish the variation elude our grasp; that our data are entirely insufficient to enable us to explain how it is that diversities result, and that Nature makes her distributions with such subtlety that in no instance can we hope to foretell her course. That she does make such individual difference is, when we examine the results, a fact which cannot be denied; it is the influence which this variation exerts upon theology that we have now particularly to examine.

What is the bearing and influence of this law upon theology? When we consider the diversity of Nature's gifts in reference to the ideal qualities of the human mind, we shall find that she sets herself generally against all sameness, homogeneity, uniformity of faculty. I think we shall find that her effort at diversity is increased instead of being lessened when it comes to the ideal-forming faculty; that she sets herself against the disposition of theology to create uniformity of faith in ideals, and



that she thus insists that, notwithstanding all interruptions, she will move mankind onward until at last she shall produce individual mental activity and therefore individual mental freedom.

It is as if Nature had said to mankind : " I confer upon each man born into the world an ideal-forming faculty different from that which I confer upon any other man. I do this in order that the ideals shall have such variety as the varied faculties untrammelled can produce." It is as if theology had replied to this : " We shall assume nevertheless that you prefer spiritual unity, and shall therefore assume the existence and persistence of a faculty above those which you confer in variety, and through the dominance of this we shall seek to compel mankind to such unity. You in some instances show that like produces like ; we shall take these instances as proofs of a universal law, and reject all others, and treat your diversity as incidental and occasional, and we will endeavor to make the few determine what the many shall accept, and so we will interpret your power." And it is as if Nature had rejoined to this : " Do so ; but I shall continue to distribute the ideal-forming faculty in the same variety, in spite of your interferences and your endeavors to repress the operation and effect of this variety. Thus by slow degrees I shall at last overcome all your efforts at unity, for I shall continue until not one vestige of that unity remains."

Thus all the efforts of men, all the refinements of metaphysical and theological logic, whilst they may repress that diversity of faculty which Nature fur-

nishes, cannot ultimately overcome it. It was the silent influence of this law which divided the theologies of Athens until persecution and death for heresy became insufficient to prevent the final decay of mythology. It was this law which lay at the root of the Reformation, and which found its expression in the assertion of the right of individual judgment in interpreting Scripture. Its influence did not stop there. It lies at the root of every division of sect, and will progress until it shall finally assert itself in complete diversity of creed.<sup>1</sup>

I have said that our data and generalizations are insufficient to explain how Nature accomplishes her varieties, but it must be seen that we are not totally at a loss to understand why she furnishes them. When once we realize the existence of the law, we need only carefully to observe its historical behavior in order to learn some of the reasons for its existence. Nature means by her law to produce variety of results from man's mental activity; she means finally to enforce the fact that coercive authority, which represses the thought of some minds, cannot be an efficient instrument for stimulating those minds to activity; she means to produce a store of human knowledge by furnishing a variety of faculty which, if freely exercised, produces such a store. If Nature were to cease this persistent varia-

<sup>1</sup> It may be argued that some minds incapable of clear thought must always accept from other minds, as authority, conclusions which they cannot reason out for themselves. The answer is that there is all the difference in the world between authority which is forced upon a mind and suggestion to a mind left free to accept or reject it. It is only authority as it implies compulsion that produces mental repression.

tion and confer uniformity of faculty, uniformity of mental action would result, probably sameness of religious ideals: but where would civilization be? Broadly, then, she means that progressive civilization is to be accomplished by the variety of faculty which she persists in bestowing upon man, and I think such progressive civilization can be measured throughout history by the extent to which her law has been allowed to prevail.

This law contains the supreme means for the detection of the errors of those thinkers who assume to reach absolute truth, and who, by the fancied authority derived from such assumption, seek to interfere with Nature's processes. It thus indicates the incongruities of the theologic theory. It shows, I think, conclusively that if there were a Supreme Being who required uniform faith and acquiescence in men concerning supernatural things, that Being must of necessity nullify his own requirement by conferring upon man through a constant law such a variety of faculty as makes such uniform faith and acquiescence a final and utter impossibility. To put this in more secular phrase: If Nature intended men to be of one faith concerning supernatural things, she has frustrated her design by persistently impressing variety and diversity upon their faith-forming capacity. When we realize, therefore, that diversity of faculty is the result of a universal natural law, we shall realize also how unmistakably, though gradually, Nature moves towards secularization, and how it is that progressive civilization depends upon acquiescence in this law. Looking backward, we

shall see how it has been that, just in the ratio that this law was uninterrupted by man, there was a lessening of the assumed mental and spiritual authority as authority, a modification of dictation concerning supramental things; while on the other hand, just to the extent that this law was interfered with, there were distortions of the human mind accompanied by repressions of moral and intellectual freedom.

There is, it is true, a vague recognition of the right of diverse opinions among Protestant theologians, but even this small degree of recognition is an enforced one—enforced by the fact that these theologians have themselves exercised such a right in becoming Protestants. They exercised it in asserting their claim to individual interpretation of Scripture. Meanwhile, nothing is so hard for them to admit as that the right by which they became Protestants rests upon a principle which cannot cease in its application to them. They cannot discern freedom beyond the point to which they have gone and at which they have stopped. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the law of mental diversity which lay at the bottom of their claim for private interpretation is a law which operates impersonally and generally, which makes no favorite of one creed or another, which will not stay its progress any more for a Protestant than it did for the Romanist, and which leads ultimately and inevitably to universal individuality. It contains within itself the power to diversify creeds until creeds shall become entirely individual ideals

In the light of this law of diversity let us now examine the highest postulate of metaphysics and theology, a postulate which is of universal acceptance. It is this : "The verdict of consciousness, or, in other words, our immediate intuitive conviction, is admitted on all hands to be a decision without appeal."<sup>1</sup> This applies strictly to immediate intuitive conviction, or that which metaphysicians call the primal act of consciousness. When we come to consider the subject-matter of any verdict of consciousness, we find that it is to the individual that the particular verdict is without appeal ; for unless this verdict of the individual accords with the verdict of another individual it can have no binding force on such another. Under these circumstances it is plain that if we are to derive uniform conceptions of truth from the collective individual consciousnesses of different individuals, it must be because there is a consentaneity in the verdicts of the immediate consciousnesses of these different individuals, or else a consenting submission, which is the same thing, of the immediate consciousnesses of all individuals to

<sup>1</sup> *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, by John Stuart Mill, New York, 1884, p. 161.

Mill in another place somewhat more amply says : "All theories of the human mind profess to be interpretations of Consciousness ; the conclusions of all of them are supposed to rest on that ultimate evidence, either immediately or remotely. What Consciousness directly reveals, together with what can be legitimately inferred from its revelations, composes, by universal admission, all that we know of the mind, or indeed of any other thing. When we know what any philosopher considers to be revealed in Consciousness, we have the key to the entire character of his metaphysical system."—*Ibid.*, p. 137.

some one individual whose immediate consciousness is supreme. If these are the essential conditions for the certainty of objective truth, it must be plain that they are conditions which the law of diversity has made and will forever make impossible; for it is inconceivable that two minds, each in the exercise of its separate individual consciousness, can furnish ideals at once essentially different and the same. When the verity of these ideals is determined by the infallible verdict of each, the product cannot be harmonious truth. It is inconceivable that consciousness thus acting to produce different results in different individuals can in any way be made a general criterion of the truth. If Nature has distributed faculty, as I have sought to show she has, with difference to each individual, any theory of central or absolute truth arising from these diverse faculties is a perpetual self-contradiction.

For the sake of greater definiteness, I will paraphrase the universal law of metaphysics and theology which I have just stated, thus: "The verdict of consciousness of the particular individual, or, in other words, the immediate intuitive conviction which that individual has, is admitted on all hands to be a decision to him which is without appeal." I thus by my paraphrase give a more specific definition of the law, without disturbing the qualities of the law. Nevertheless there is all imaginable difference, in consequence, between the law as first given and the law as paraphrased. For it is upon the first statement of the law that the theologian stands; it is upon the second statement of the law that he

cannot stand. It is this that convicts theology and metaphysics of what Archbishop Whately has called the Irrelevant Conclusion. That is, the first statement of the law is taken by the theologian and the metaphysician as indicating something which the paraphrased or specific statement inevitably negatives. It is upon the first statement of the law that metaphysics has based its whole theory of authority, and theology has laid its whole claim for the support of dogma ; the paraphrased or specific statement of the law makes such support of authority and dogma impossible. The difference between the two statements is, that the first cannot be applied without doing violence to its plain meaning, and that the second can be applied, and the application confirms the meaning ; for it is impossible to apply to minds, collectively taken, a law which in its essence requires, in application, the recognition of certain inherent differences in individual minds. Immediate consciousness is not a joint or an associated possession ; it is an individual possession ; it is held in severalty, and the moment the theologian attempts to make a specific use of consciousness, in any case, the assumption which he sets forth for consciousness as a collective thing, is defeated ; for consciousness, if it is anything, is a feeling which belongs to each one, and which furnishes each one with his convictions, and certifies those convictions to him ; and, as each individual is different from every other individual, by that difference the product of each individual consciousness must be different from the product of every other. There are varieties of ideals confirmed

by the immediate consciousness, from which, to each consciousness confirming them, there is no appeal. If this is the case with the initial act of consciousness, or, as metaphysicians call it, self-consciousness or immediate knowledge, it also applies to the object of consciousness, the specific religious belief; for the persistent personality of each individual controls both alike. Theology loses the sanction of its authority in the variety of convictions concerning those conclusions from which there is no appeal. Seeking to build a foundation upon which unity of faith shall stand and be enforced, it builds a foundation which, the moment the superstructure is begun, is seen to be no other than a foundation upon which variety of ideals must arise, and hence, one upon which a unity of faith cannot rest.

My whole thesis, then, is this: As each human mind, by the law of its constitution, is different from every other, therefore, where there is mental freedom inevitable differences will be exhibited in the general result of thought and belief. Every church movement in history shows the determination of Nature to diversify previous conceptions, no matter how sacred these conceptions were assumed to be, or how surrounded with authority. It is solely upon this principle that we can explain at once the slightest progress and the largest toward freedom and civilization. What can be the value of ideals as expressions of ultimate truth, when we find them exhibiting such inherent variety? Or why should we regard unity of conception, were it possi-



ble, as the highest virtue of life with reference to supersensual things, when we find that, to exist, the common mind would have to be repressed by the authority of antecedent tradition, by sophistication in childhood, or when we find that such partial unity as is possible can be maintained only by repressive and authoritative influences which prevent the acquisition of knowledge just in proportion as they are dominant?

If it be the highest ideal of theology that that which is called spiritual truth shall be held by mankind in unity of faith, the conditions upon which this can be realized must be, that such truth shall be accepted by every mind alike; that the human faculty must be changed and unified in order that it may receive this truth, or that there shall be one individual mind universally recognized as the infallible conceiver and custodian of this truth. Were this possible, how incompatible such a condition would be with mental progress needs only to be stated to be understood. The nearest realization the world has ever had of such a condition was reached when the Church of Rome exercised its greatest ascendancy in Europe, with the pope as its head. During the prevalence of this condition, ecclesiasticism and militancy, as we have seen, went hand in hand. Together they paralyzed freedom and suppressed thought, and they continued to do this, with more or less vigor, until the Reformation somewhat disturbed the condition by lifting a part of the repression of ecclesiasticism from the common mind. Every step of advance since then has been marked

by some degree of scepticism due to the underlying force of the law of diversity. Every Protestant to-day owes his Protestantism to a degree of scepticism generated by this law. The theologian cannot reasonably assume that a movement thus gathering strength as it proceeds shall stop at this stage of development. When, therefore, he shall come to realize the principle which made him a Protestant, he will come the better to realize in that principle, whatever he may conceive to be its ultimate, a natural force, which moves the world in a direction from unity of acceptance for supersensual beliefs, and from the sense of sacredness concerning those beliefs, gradually towards diversity of conclusion and secularism.

The modern theologian, entertaining a certain confidence in the assumed power of theology as the exclusive arbiter of ultramental truth, hopes to preserve his confidence upon the recognition by science of the fact that science itself does not assume to discover such truth. The scientific philosopher insists that such confidence is not well founded; for, although science does not indeed attempt to teach anything beyond the inferences which she derives from natural law concerning the supersensual, and fully admits her limitations in this respect, she nevertheless may, and does, claim the right and the power of testing the value or the valuelessness of all theologic assumption to make a supramental sense supreme. Moreover, she claims for herself better qualifications for testing the nature of these assumptions than have those theologians,

because she can more clearly divest herself of those sacred prepossessions which render it impossible for the theologian to make a dry examination. Science can make her study objective by putting herself as far as possible outside of the emotional influences which inhere in theology ; she can view the movement and behavior of those influences as that movement and behavior exhibit themselves in the world.

## CHAPTER IV.

### INTUITION (*Concluded*).

HAVING considered the attitude of metaphysicians and theologians towards intuition, I shall now proceed to examine the relation and bearing of the scientific philosopher towards it.

The scientific philosopher's methods are in most respects just the opposite of those employed by the metaphysicians and theologians. Where the latter subordinate natural law to ideals, the scientific philosopher resolutely subordinates ideals to natural law and to facts. Although he recognizes the existence of innate perceptions, he does not concede any phase of consciousness bearing upon specific belief in dogma as conclusive or dominant. Concerning theologic dogmas, his mediate consciousness has been so influenced by the relation of cause and effect in his surroundings that his immediate consciousness refuses to certify as final truth any proposition which falls out of accord with his reason and his experience, no matter how superior to reason the subject of such proposition may be assumed by the theologians to be. He insists that all truth which we can know must be in harmony with all phenomena that we do know. He sees in every

effort of theology, to appeal to the intuitive qualities of mind in contradiction or repression of reason, an antagonism to that law which I have pointed out. From this he concludes the insufficiency of authority to establish coherent truth in matters supersensual. With him the imagination or ideal-forming faculty still plays an important part ; but, important as it is, it is secondary to his reason ; it is his hand-maiden, not his governor. Whilst there are among his fellows many whose theories exhibit a great variety, science always employs these products of imagination as hypotheses, and insists that the value of these hypotheses shall finally be measured by their accord with the known facts of science. Until they come into such accord, they are purely tentative. In a word, the scientific philosopher regards the difference between science and theology concerning the use of the imagination to be this : that whilst, with the theologian, the imagination challenges the fact, with the scientific philosopher the fact challenges the imagination. It is from the difference with which science and theology employ the imagination that there results diversity of doctrine in theology and coherence in the findings of science ; for I think it may be set down as true that, just as the products of the spiritual sense, the ideals, the doctrines, exhibit that tendency which I have hitherto shown towards subdivision and diversity, in inverse ratio do the products of the scientific mind exhibit a tendency towards cohesion and unity. Gravitation, planetary motion, radiation of heat, conservation of force, each, in the elementary stage, was character-

ized by wide difference of opinion, multiplied theories and varying hypotheses. According to the methods of science, all theories are held as tentative and are subjected to the tests of acquired knowledge. In the sifting process, such of these theories as prove discordant with known natural law are discarded and such of them as fall into harmony with this known natural law become thereby verified as established facts. This principle of ascertainment characterizes investigation along special lines as well as in science generally, for the workers in special lines are but contributors to the common fund of knowledge. The disciples have their emotional conflicts at the threshold of investigation. This is the stage in which ideals flourish. From this stage, by the gradual submission of each ideal and emotion to the test of knowledge, the emotional elements gradually subside, and, under the influence of quiet examination, the relative values of the products of the emotion are determined, until such as fall into harmony with natural law prevail. From the united contributions of special science, so progressing, a body of truth is furnished which becomes fixed. Once established it moves as a cohesive whole upon the mind of the world, and, by irresistible persuasion, obtains at last universal acceptance. Nothing can illustrate better than this movement the inherent power of relative truth to displace those ideals which are assumed to determine absolute truth.

Let us briefly examine the manner in which science influences theology. We all know how few there are, of the great multitude of believers, who ever

#### 84 *PROGRESS AND MORALS OF SECULARISM.*

seek to deal face to face with the attributes which they assume for divinity. All experience shows that belief of the most positive character—a sense of certainty founded upon the most intense conviction—exists in very many minds in which there is an entire ignorance of the specific character of the thing which is believed. One devoutly believing is not likely of himself to be disposed to examine critically the object of his belief, nor can he wish to submit to such an examination by another. Between a man who feels that the world, without his conception of an ever-present Creator, possessing attributes which he thinks he himself can define and comprehend, would be empty and hollow—and another man who insists that the ultimate attributes of such a Creator can never be grasped by the human mind, there is a gulf which no verbal argument can fathom, which no kindly feeling or soft words can bridge over. The two may indeed be friends, but their friendship will rest upon other grounds than their deepest convictions, and will probably best be maintained by the least reference to those convictions. There is no courtesy that can make a believer in a personal God look patiently or kindly upon a denial which to him imports simply the blackness of despair, nor does it seem possible to such an one that there can be entire innocence or honesty in such a denial. The devout believer is apt to judge the actuating spirit of denial from the example of the coarse polemical sceptic, who in the name of science jeers and scoffs at belief, rather than from the example of the earnest scientific student who is moved by an

honest purpose to put truth above all else. With the same intensity by which the theologic believer feels a certainty of his own faith in attributes which he cannot know, will he deny the possibility of his incapacity of knowing those attributes. The very vagueness furnishes to him his highest sense of certainty. It is entirely futile, therefore, to point out to him, however plainly, what to a scientific mind seems certain, viz.: the incapacity of any human mind to confirm feeling by knowledge concerning that which is beyond knowledge.

No doubt, coincident with the general growth of science and the general decline of theology, the difference between such a believer and the disciple of science is lessening. The great influence which is bringing the two nearer together, and closing the gulf between them, is the unimpassioned force of impersonal surroundings born of the progress of science. He whom wrangling and argument cannot move, comes to be moved, not in the presence of another, nor by the individual effort of another, but in solitude, by the consciousness in his own mind of the harmony of natural law as it is developed in all he sees about him, and by the inferences which he himself draws from this impassive and impersonal power. The sense of certainty derived from his intuition concerning ideals becomes modified by the more persuasive certainty which is furnished him by the operation of natural law. When he learns the history which geology teaches of the gradual growth of the earth, and finds this in harmony with all knowledge, he believes with a little less assurance



the sacred account of a creation in six days. If he comes to accept the inferences of evolution, it is from facts and knowledge which make these harmonious and reasonable, and he thereby somewhat modifies his belief in a race beginning in physical and moral perfection, followed by deterioration through the fall of man, as set forth in the same sacred account. If he looks into the laws of the correlation of forces, the indestructibility of matter, and the persistence of these laws, he comes to place a little less confidence in the personal interventions of an emotional Being, as set forth again in the same sacred account. Meanwhile his divinity gradually grows more vague, and, if now he faces the question of the personality of a Creator, it is with less sense of reverence for his ignorance than he formerly had. Whatever has been or is his religious belief, he does not become angered at the illustration of natural law, as it is taught him by a dynamo; neither is he impelled to quarrel with the larger impressions which reach his mind from the silent exhibition of the correlation of forces, nor to inveigh against the harmony with which evolution impresses him. It is because he cannot quarrel with these that they enter his mind. It is through their impersonal character that they become persuasive and potent in modifying his mode of thought. When, from these silent influences, he looks about him, and finds that others similarly situated have been similarly moved, and finds that the world generally exhibits an interest in questioning that which before was resisted with impatience, he is reassured by the significance of modern conditions.

I shall now proceed to make something of a digression, for a purpose that will presently appear. I have noted the distinction which metaphysicians make between knowledge and belief; the former as being the primary or immediate act of consciousness, and the latter as being the secondary or mediate. Quite in accordance with this is the distinction which the mental and moral philosophers make between the two phases of that quality of feeling which they call conscience; the one phase being designated as immediate conscience and the other as mediate conscience. I shall endeavor to make this distinction plain, both because it has frequently been confused by writers on the subject, and because a correct understanding of it is of the highest importance to the question which we are now considering.<sup>1</sup>

Immediate conscience is that voice within which pronounces to each individual whether he is true to what he believes. Mediate conscience is that quality which has to do with the object of belief; it is the voice which pronounces to each individual whether what he believes is true.

The operation of the first quality of conscience is, to the individual, constant and infallible; whatever any individual's faith at a given time may be, this certifies that individual's loyalty to such faith. On the other hand, mediate conscience deals with objective things. All observation teaches that beliefs are

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Whewell apologizes for Bishop Butler's confusion of the two qualities of conscience, although he himself designates these two qualities as, Conscience the Law, and Conscience the Witness, and furnishes, in one short chapter, no less than six instances of the same confusion.—Whewell's *Elements of Morality: Of Conscience*, book iii., chap. xiv.

constantly changing in the mind, modified by association, surroundings, and circumstances; so that what one believes at one time may be different from what he believes at another. Meanwhile sincerity to belief is a constant and permanent quality. Thus it may be said that the prime characteristic of immediate conscience is sincerity, whilst the mediate body conscience is concerned with a specific creed or of faith which varies from time to time as it is affected by surroundings. Whilst, then, one's body of creed or faith may change, so that a specific creed held to-day by any individual may conflict with the specific creed which that same individual formerly held, the immediate conscience does not justify any recreancy to or denial of the creed held to-day, any more than it justified any recreancy to or denial of a creed held last year, notwithstanding these two creeds, objectively considered, are utterly inconsistent with each other. The immediate conscience thus invariably condemns our present purpose or intention, whenever that present purpose or intention does not conform to our existing convictions, or, in other words, with the objective belief which we happen at the time to have.

The difficulties which all theologians and metaphysicians have in dealing with these two phases of conscience do not lie in their declaration of the law, but in their application of it. A law which essentially promotes individual conviction they so apply as to repress individual conviction. They do this by setting up an authority for a body of dogma to which they demand that an individual conviction

shall submit, and which it must approve. The law of the two consciences inevitably carries conclusions which theology does not intend it to carry, because, if theology demands anything, it demands that the individual must believe in a specific body of dogma. This solecism may be better shown by taking an instance of the law which has been employed by a theological writer, to illustrate the qualities of the two consciences.

"History," he says, "furnishes no more striking instance, I think, of a change of this sort than is presented in the life of St. Paul. It appears from his own statement, that both before and after his conversion to the Christian faith, he was the same earnest, active, conscientious man. But how different were his course and conduct under the influence of changed convictions. At one time he was denouncing and even persecuting with energy and resolute purpose, the same 'profession' that he afterwards advocated and defended with like zeal and ability. . . . We shall not find, I think, in all the account that we have of his life, anything to show that he was not as sincere, as earnest, and as conscientious, too, before his conversion as he was after."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Two Consciences*, pp. 58-61. Philadelphia, 1870.

The same writer says: "When St. Paul declared in the presence of the Jewish council, 'Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day'—the statement seemed to the High Priest (who no doubt had some knowledge of Paul's earlier history) so outrageously inconsistent with the facts, that 'he commanded them that stood by to smite him on the mouth.' In another place he repeats substantially the same statement, 'I thank God

What is the general inference? Plainly that what applied to St. Paul applies to any man to-day; namely, that any one who honestly professes belief in a dogma concerning supersensual things, whatever that dogma may be, illustrates the constancy and infallibility of the law of his immediate conscience; that it is not the thing believed, but his act of believing, which so illustrates this law. But can the theologian admit such an application? Can he admit any application whatever of this law except in a case where the individual happens to coincide with him in his theology, without removing the very keystone upon which theology is built? Theology is thus thrown into the dilemma of having to uphold the solecism that sincerity to faith is the highest possible virtue of man, but at the same time that it is only a virtue when the individual mind falls into accord with some specific set of dogma announced by authority. The theologic logic in support of

whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience.' Again, in his defense before Agrippa, he refers expressly to his earlier convictions and to the conduct that consistently resulted from them: 'I verily thought with myself' (that is, within myself, or was convinced) 'that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth: which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests.' And having in this way described at some length how zealously he had persecuted the Christians, 'being exceedingly mad against them,' he then relates to the king, in explanation of the great change that has taken place in his conduct, the circumstances of his own conversion to the Christian faith: in other words, he gives an account of the means by which a great change has been produced in his convictions; a change of which that in his life and conduct was only the natural and legitimate consequence."

this proposition involves a sophism of the type which Archbishop Whately has designated as the Irrelevant Conclusion ; that is, an argument which proves a different proposition from that which it pretends to prove, the difference of meaning being disguised by similarity of language. The usual method by which theologians seek to avoid this dilemma is by assuming that there is something other than a spiritual sense in man which makes him disbelieve a dogma acceptable to them ; that it is his wickedness, his perverseness, his moral depravity. They fail to identify the sense which they set up as the underlying support of their faith with that sense to which every individual is entitled—that sense upon which individual honesty depends. To the secular mind the two phases of conscience can be identified only by their actual behavior ; thus identified, they are essentially an individual possession ; and just as surely as an inconstant thing cannot be constant, or an infallible thing fallible, so surely the immediate conscience cannot verify to the individual human mind, convictions which are not convictions. It cannot verify this theology, or that theology, or any theology that does not accord with conviction. Logic, then, teaches the unswerving application of the law of immediate conscience to each individual. But whilst it inexorably determines that it is the prime duty of each man to be true to his convictions, it just as inexorably determines that individual fidelity to convictions does not necessarily make those convictions, objectively considered, positive truth. Although all the efforts of theology have been

directed to holding faith in dogma as a fixed and constant thing, and in fitting the mind of man to it, the progress of civilization has been measured by a resistance to these efforts.<sup>1</sup>

When we turn to instances of the behavior of these two phases of conscience, and study their operation upon the individual, we find that the individual devotee of each sect of theology furnishes a most complete example of the inconsistency of the general theologic theory<sup>2</sup>; and when we turn to historic instances, we at once discover how unerring has been the immediate conscience of the individual and how incapable have been the sum of the mediate consci-

<sup>1</sup> A public man with an intense immediate conscience, possessed of a narrow intellect, and clothed with political power, is the most dangerous possession a nation can have. Spain had such a possession in the person of Philip II., and England had another in the person of Charles I. The manner in which each nation dealt with its possession exhibits both the difference in the characteristics of the two peoples and the difference in the political and theological consequences which followed. Spain submitted to Philip and lost its moral and political prestige: England revolted against Charles and gained all the prestige that Spain lost.

<sup>2</sup> I know a devout Catholic woman the sincerity of whose belief I cannot question. A common friend once in her presence commended individual sincerity as the highest possible virtue a human being could have. She inferred that this commendation must of necessity imply his acquiescence to her creed, and when he told her that he did not believe in any part of that creed, her answer was: "You tell me to be true to my faith, and in the next breath you tell me that what I believe you utterly refuse to accept as true. I can draw but two conclusions from this: one is, that you are insincere in denying the truth of what I believe and yet commending my fidelity; the other is, that you are lacking in that light from heaven which must at last bring you to my faith. I prefer to think you are honest, and I therefore believe that heaven will bring you at

ences of men to establish the unity of any creed of supersensual truth. It was by implicit obedience to the command of immediate conscience that the early martyrs of the Church faced death rather than recant their specific faith; it was by a like implicit obedience to its command that every honest heretic from the time of Giordino Bruno to the present day refused to recant his heresy. It was this immediate conscience that was the *δαιμον* of Socrates, as well as the spirit of Luther. It was through obedience to this that Savonarola was put to death; it was disobedience to it that made Galileo deny the truth of his knowledge before the papal tribunal. It was obedience to this that has made every sectary stand up for the convictions which he has in opposition to other creeds. It was obedience to this that made the pagan emperor Aurelius as honest as the Christian martyr Justin, and the Christian martyr as honest as the pagan emperor; disobedience to this that would have made both equally dishonest.

Here we have a law which in itself rises above all length into the Catholic Church." What can better illustrate the signal failure of this devoted Christian to distinguish the two phases of conscience?

An equally devout and sincere Protestant friend once told me that she could not conceive how any man could unqualifiedly approve his Christian mother's sincerity to her belief, and yet refuse acceptance of the creed in which that mother died. It was thus impossible to her because she could not distinguish between a Christian mother's sense of sincerity and the objective quality of the creed upon which that sincerity acted. I cannot but think that if she had been considering the case of the son of a Parsee, or of a Mohammedan, or of a Chinese mother, her application of the theologic "principle" might have been different.



specific creeds, as such, and determines for each individual the value to him of his creed, whatever that creed is. It is by the operation of this law that honest doubt is innocent and that the profession of a faith not honestly believed is degrading. A dual sense, which by its immediate impulse expresses so high a certainty to each individual, and by its mediate influence exhibits such variety of product, cannot in any possible way known among men, justify the theologic effort to compel an individual to profess what he does not believe, nor can it certify the varying products of immediate conscience as absolute truth.

The purpose of this digression has been primarily to show the inherent force of the immediate conscience as the true source whence the individual sense of verity comes; that, without accord with this individual sense of verity, no body of truth can be permanently maintained, and to show at the same time, what is even more important, that the individual sense of verity is of itself no warrant for objective truth, and that it never can establish the verity of supersensual dogma. It is by appeal to this immediate conscience that theology must have its final test. It is to this immediate conscience also that science appeals, and the appeal thus made by science is of the highest moral quality—it is nothing other than an appeal to individual self-honesty. The manner in which science makes her appeal is by presenting her fruits—the fruits of knowledge—depending upon their quiet influence upon objects of belief and faith—an influence involving the exercise

of the secondary or mediate phase of conscience—and thereafter appealing to the immediate conscience for the verification of the conclusions impelled by the influence of knowledge upon these objects of belief. The efficacy of the impressions which science thus makes upon the mind lies largely in the fact that the impressions are impersonal; that they are the impulses of knowledge; it is because they are impersonal that they can soften the shock and break the rudeness of mental transitions from the feeling to the reason—from the sense of sacredness to the sense of secularism. It is because they are impersonal that they are persuasive where human argument alone would be repulsive—touching matters of devotional and emotional faith. Just as secular knowledge is gained under the influence of surroundings, preconceptions of dogmatic faith which before were certified by the individual's sense of self-honesty become displaced through the silent appeals which this knowledge makes to the immediate conscience—the self-honesty of the individual. Thus this unerring faculty of immediate conscience—this sense of sincerity to conviction—certifies a new set of beliefs to the individual mind which harmonize with the newly acquired knowledge. Every instance of the modification of theologic belief in the individual mind, whatever its degree, occurs through the displacement of some old faith by the substitution of some new knowledge, and involves an appeal to the mental self-honesty or the immediate conscience of the individual. Within the body of the Church, with the professional theologian whose office it is to guard

prepossessions, the progress of this impersonal influence, constantly resisted, is very slow; but even here it is the fundamental cause for every shade of variety in belief which different theologians entertain; from those which are most narrow to those which are called most liberal. Upon theology generally, the first solvent influence of modern science was indicated rather by a revival of criticism and exegetics than by anything like a disposition to examine the subject fundamentally; nevertheless, within the limits of exegetics, the varieties which have been produced indicate the slow progressive influence of science upon the minds even of the custodians of theology. Modern exegetical criticism began first to modify the rigor of verbal interpretation of the Scriptures in Germany. The modification was manifested by the influence of secular knowledge—the appeal of this knowledge to the self-honesty, or the immediate conscience of the individual theologians, for confirmation of the knowledge. The progress of exegetics became thus marked by a disposition to weigh relative values of sacred writ, which involved the exercise of the judgment and the reason. As distinctions arose from the persuasions of the reason, individual differences of opinion arose with them, and these tended to counteract the dictation of sacred authority. Hence arose a slight modification of the sense of authority. But the movement could not be confined to the exegetical field. Proceeding from this field, and appealing to minds less metaphysical in tone, science has pressed upon the unwilling attention of the theologians, one

after another, facts of secular knowledge as they have grown by the study of physical laws, and, one after another, these facts have gradually come, with varying degrees of force, to induce the theologian to exchange some part of his sacred tradition for the new knowledge.

In the theologian, then, we have an instance of the operation of the law of the two consciences, just the reverse of that which his construction of that law would demand. The surrounding influences of science cause his immediate conscience to certify relative truth as superior to his pre-existing conceptions of assumed spiritual and absolute truth. That the theologian himself, bowing to instances of this law, resists its application generally, is a necessity of his profession, because any other course would immediately break down his system of theology—break down the theory by which sacred authority interferes with this very law,—and, by overthrowing all sacred authority, overthrow all theology. In considering the attitude of theology towards science, therefore, we have to bear in mind that it is from an inherent necessity of theology that the professional theologian deals with his revelation on the theory that it is something which, although it may be influenced in particular parts by modern knowledge, cannot be affected in its remaining parts or as a whole; that it is a necessity to treat so much of revelation as is not specifically overthrown by science, as still sacred and certain. It is on account of this necessity that the advanced theologian, accepting some of the results of modern scholarship and of

science, and chiding those of his brethren who still cling to the parts of revelation which he has thus rejected, nevertheless adheres with reverent tenacity to just so much of this revelation as has not been displaced in his own mind. Thus Canon Farrar says:

"No one who is acquainted with the history of science, and has sufficient honesty to accept facts, can possibly deny that scarcely a single truth of capital importance in science has ever been enunciated without having to struggle for life against the fury of theological dogmatists. In every instance the dogmatists have been ignominiously defeated. The world moved, as Galileo said it did, in spite of the Inquisition. A great Puritan divine thought that he had checked the progress of astronomical inquiry when he said that he preferred to believe the Holy Ghost rather than Newton; yet Newton was absolutely right, and the Puritan divine was hopelessly wrong."<sup>1</sup>

Now let us briefly examine the specifications of Canon Farrar's charges of ignorance in his brethren, with a view to learning his own attitude of mind, as a theologian, towards science and theology.

"Thousands of pulpits," he says, "fulminated against the early geologists; and one religious controversialist—with the exquisite culture and suavity which mark the ordinary language of self-sufficient bigots—satisfied himself that, during the ages which preceded the creation, 'God had been preparing a hell for the geologists.' Yet, before thirty years had elapsed, the rejection of the

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Claims upon the Pulpit*, by Archdeacon Farrar, in *The Forum* for November, 1889, page 254.

truths which palæontology had revealed would have been regarded as the mark of an idiot. . . . In our own time, to give but one instance more, we have heard from preachers, and sometimes from men who could barely scrape through the matriculation examination of a tenth-rate college, the most furious denunciations of Darwinism and the doctrine of evolution."

Having, as a student of science with newly acquired knowledge, made these charges, he turns to employ his remaining sacred sense to announce a specific point of faith. "All Christians," he says, "alike believe in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

What, may we ask, is the necessary relation between the ignorance of his brethren and his own assertion of theologic belief? Or, rather, what is the logic of the relation of these ignorant brethren towards theology, as contrasted with the logic of the relation which Canon Farrar himself holds towards theology? The sole reason why these brethren do not accept the teachings of geology, Darwinism, or evolution, is that it appears to them that only by the Biblical account can they find logical warrant for the theory of "the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." In the Biblical account they find a coherent setting forth of that which progressively leads from a creation up to the scheme of redemption. By the reasoning of the ignorant brethren, if the theology of redemption rests upon anything, it rests upon the account of the creation

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 259.

of man in the likeness of God, and the perfection of man followed by his fall through the sin of Adam. To their minds, the New Testament recognizes in this account the whole foundation for the dogma of redemption. They feel that St. Paul has put the premises and conclusion of the scheme both of redemption and resurrection, in a single sentence, when he says: "As in Adam all men died, so in Christ shall all be made alive again." Whether we treat the theory of these brethren as true or false, we must recognize that whatever logic there is in it comes from the synthetic Biblical account of assumed perfection followed by the fall. This is the attitude of the ignorant brethren.

What, contrasted with this, is Canon Farrar's position? He bids these brethren sweep away what seems to them the only foundation upon which their belief in redemption depends; then he enjoins them still to hold that belief. In thus doing, is he not manifestly far less consistent and less logical than those whose ignorance he deplores? They at least draw the warrant for their faith from a cohesive body of tradition, whilst he refuses the foundation upon which that faith essentially rests, but still grasps the faith. They make a legitimate conclusion from their premise, whilst he seeks to overthrow a part of the premise but retains the conclusion. They take the whole of St. Paul's sentence. He divides it, and, throwing aside the first half which tells us, "as in Adam all men died," retains the disjointed remainder, which concludes, "so in Christ shall all be made alive again."

One is led to ask what particular faculty Canon Farrar employs in challenging the contention of his ignorant brethren. Plainly it cannot be the spiritual sense, regarded objectively as a principle of guidance, since, whenever we measure this sense by the behavior of the different minds employing it, we find that it produces far more consistent results in the ignorant brethren than in those who are moved by modern knowledge. That which he really does employ, therefore, is his secular knowledge. It is with this knowledge that he challenges the interpretations of the spiritual sense of these brethren. It is by reason of his better acquaintance with physical science that he assumes to deny to them the value of certain tradition by which they have arrived at their conclusions. But, having thus proceeded by means of this secular knowledge to deny the value of the exercise of the spiritual sense in others, he turns to employ his own assumed sacred sense in setting up dogmas, a part of the foundation of which he has sought to destroy. He may thus have less of the ignorance of superstition than his brethren, but he has also less logic than they.

Meanwhile, science itself is quite as indifferent to Canon Farrar's disjointed faith—that is, a faith severed or partially severed from traditional foundation—as it is to the fuller faith of those brethren who have derived their convictions from the unqualified acceptance of the traditional foundation; because by all the laws of logic there is more that is vague in the conclusions of one who rejects a part of the basis of those conclusions than there is in the con-



clusions of those who unquestioningly accept such basis.

Having made such an arraignment, it is quite in accordance with the confusion he exhibits in dealing with the relations between science and theology, that Canon Farrar should say: "No truth of science *can* collide with any truth of religion."<sup>1</sup> Whilst nothing, indeed, can be more correct than this as an abstract proposition, yet when we come to make an application of it, nothing can be more misleading. A simple paraphrase will illustrate my point. If Canon Farrar had said that no conclusion of science *as to what is true* can collide with any conclusion of religion or theology *as to what is true*, then any one might see at a glance how Canon Farrar, in challenging his brethren, bears witness against his own declaration.

Nothing is so characteristic of the so-called liberal theologian as is this sort of mental inharmony. The moment he begins to recognize in science an agent for the modification of parts of revelation or theology, that moment he becomes hopelessly involved in mental compromise. His sacred sense and the teachings of science, which he tries to think of as harmonious, are irrepressible antagonists. Whilst on the one hand, with the secular side of his mind, he arraigns all those who have been moved by science to a less degree of knowledge than he, on the other hand, with the theologic sense, he arraigns all who have been moved by the same means beyond the point which he has reached.

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, p. 255.

A faith so pushed about must have lost to its possessor some of the old consolations which inhered in it when it was held by him as an unbroken whole. The process by which an advanced theological thinker disturbs the illusions of his brethren must inevitably work mental disturbance with him also. It is the unfortunate dilemma of theology that these enforced transitions which science is making involve mental antagonisms in the active clerical mind which often carry consequences of the most pathetic nature. Those of the Church who are most influenced by science, most exhibit mental unrest. This is especially the case with the theologian of fine sensibility. His way lies through apprehension which the disturbance of ideals inevitably causes. In every step of his mental progress he treads upon images which he had been taught to revere, and disturbs traditions with which he had associated everything worth having. As he yields to the quiet influences of science, or, rather, as he is impelled by his own sense of integrity to recognize its truths, he comes to feel that there is no sure resting-place for one of his calling anywhere. He finds himself in antagonism with the sectaries about him, and with the narrowness and bigotry of his own particular set. He not only realizes the indifference of the world to his struggles, but encounters the studied misrepresentations by others of motives which he himself feels above all things to be most honest, since his course lies where his immediate conscience immediately directs. No severer strain can be imagined than that by which an earnest, honest theologian, with

acute sensibilities, who has been led by his earlier convictions to take upon himself vows for the protection of a specific creed, is pressed by surroundings and by the inexorable forces of his immediate conscience gradually to relinquish a revelation which the Church has regarded as a fundamental and un-failing support. It is fortunate, indeed, for most theologians, that the progress of this influence is slow, and that the degrees of mental distress which I have indicated are therefore rather exceptional than common.

Turning to the average lay student, we find that whilst he is impressed with the teachings of theology, there is placed upon him no professional duty for maintaining the faith of others, and that, therefore, the movement affects him less severely. We may assume that such an average student has had instilled into him the usual orthodoxy of childhood. In his church-going he here and there comes to encounter a new minister who employs efforts to reconcile the old order of things to modern surroundings, and, in the effort, the average student detects concessions to unorthodox criticism, involving a disturbance of that creed which he has been taught to hold as sacred. If this at first shocks him, the shock is softened when he finds the more intelligent minds about him, in one degree or another, moving the boundaries of their old specific faith. If, as a student, he takes up science, he is thereby induced, as an incident to his studies, into a general questioning of those things which were before forbidden. He may here and there recall the content of childhood

which accompanied his unquestioning faith, and may feel an occasional rebuke from his conscience for his questionings, as his secular studies more directly interfere with his old notions. His geology trenches upon the old cosmogony. The theory of evolution comes gradually to displace his ideas of special creation. Philology impresses his mind with the error of those who wrote the Revelation; and so, from step to step, his mind naturally gains new habits of thought. Here he finds what I have called his immediate conscience unerringly registering the new individual convictions derived from new knowledge, and in this manner supplanting the old dogma. At length he reaches the point where he is impelled to question the personality of a divinity. The anthropomorphic notion which he had formerly but vaguely held as most certain, now appears to his mind as unthinkable. "Infinite" and "absolute" are now mere words—efforts to express the inexpressible. If here again he examines his mental progress he finds that his sense of self-honesty certifies convictions which are totally different from those he formerly held; they have ceased to be theological; they have become secular. Throughout all the movement the immediate conscience has been the guardian of his honesty, and as such it has forbidden him in an unerring manner to accept as sacred that which he cannot believe, and it has impelled him, and still impels him, to accept that which he can believe. Thus, where it was once his duty to believe implicitly in a theologic dogma, it is now his duty entirely to question that dogma.

If theology tells such an one that he has not the sacred sense and is therefore incapable of determining the value of faith, this student looks about him, and, seeing the dissolution of creeds that is going on, asks: "Who is it that has this sense? Who among all the custodians of creed? And what is the unified truth which this authority sets forth?" He reflects: If Rome, with all its central power, was insufficient to hold the assumed truth together, how can it be concluded that unity is to be expected from the innumerable sources of authority, the innumerable phases of the assertion of supremacy, seeing that each one, impelled by the law of diversity, negatives the assumption of the others? If he thinks more specifically upon the subject, remembering the law of the two consciences, he may say that, whilst he cannot object to another following his own ideal, or any ideal accepted from a sect, so far as this affects only him who entertains the ideal; yet if such ideal is different from his, he cannot see the right of any compulsion upon him concerning his own ideal. He will infer that, just as sacredness is assumed for a given ideal or set of ideals, and just as power accompanies ecclesiasticism by which professions of belief can be enforced, there is inevitably exercised a tyranny over individual ideals. He looks at ideals generally, and from their behavior he judges them; and, observing this behavior, he finds that whatever degree of unity of different individual ideals there is, comes from outside impression or oppression, and that wherever ideals are spontaneous they are marked with the variety which characterizes

individuality. In a word, he claims his right over his own ideals by virtue of that great law of the supremacy of the immediate conscience—a law which, whilst the theologian denies it to him, is nevertheless a law upon which that theologian professes to build his theology.

The effect of modern influences, thus exhibited, upon the theologian and the secular student, comprises, after all, a part, and a lesser part, of the sum of the effects of science upon theology ; for these latter influences, as we have seen, are exerted upon the great mass of mankind, and here they are even larger and greater and therefore of comparatively more importance. The common man—he who is neither scholar nor theologian—thinks, under the influence of science, otherwise than does the theologian or the student. He knows nothing of the antinomies of metaphysics ; he has never directly contemplated the abstract, the absolute, or the infinite ; nor does he care for those intricate syllogisms in which thinkers wrestle with these terms. He will never seek to detect in the processes of the metaphysical or theological student those examples of *ignoratio elenchi* with which the reasoning of the disciples of theology and metaphysics abound. He views the problem, not as the metaphysician studying introspection, nor even as the scientific scholar who makes the larger generalizations from the accumulated data, but as a common man. Although he is ignorant of the formulæ of logic, he has ordinary faculties for observing the panorama which now moves before him. So observing, he becomes habituated to the constancy

of natural laws as these laws express themselves in action, and he observes how natural their explanations are, how in harmony are their movements with all about him, and how out of harmony they are with that theory which makes them all the subject of an assumed divine interference. By such association he comes, at last, from viewing Nature and estimating her by her behavior, to accept readily the scientific explanations of her behavior, and these he finds instinctively out of accord with the preconceived notions which he has derived from theology; so, by degrees, he becomes incredulous of, and indifferent to, the explanations of supernatural agency.

When we study the great underlying cause of moral and mental progression, as concerns the masses, we discover that it is not by those attacks against theology which the polemical sceptic makes, not even by those direct attacks which are sometimes made in the name of science, that the common mind is most moved. It is the individual's own observation of natural law that counts for most; it is this that actually begins to make him think; in a word, his mind is opened by the pregnant implications of science itself, and not by verbal argument. Indeed, so far as dialectics generally go, as I have hitherto indicated, modern thought has not improved upon that of Greece. It seems to me, therefore, that far too much importance has been given to the influence of polemical scepticism upon the masses. If the wranglers and scoffers are listened to more generally now than formerly, their larger audience must be attributed, not to their mental superi-

ority, nor to their individual power of persuasiveness. In neither of these qualities can they be said to be equal to their distinguished predecessors. They may indeed be more persuasive and convincing, but if they are, it is because they have been furnished with data which, independent of their argument, have opened the minds of men to spontaneous thinking.<sup>1</sup>

When we turn from the specific illustration which I have given to take a general view of the influence of science upon all the various minds of mankind, and to contrast this general influence with the general influence of theology, we discover that a constantly increasing fund of knowledge, as this increasing fund is acquired by science, augments the impersonal influence of science upon the human

<sup>1</sup> There are thousands of men to-day who are employed, in one way or another, in the development and application of dynamic electricity. These men have come into this employment within ten years; many of them are ordinarily skilled mechanics. If the workman at an electric dynamo hears from the pulpit a description of a stroke of lightning attributed to a direct act of a god behind it, the statement impresses him with something less of reverence than similar utterances would have affected his father or his grandfather thirty or forty years ago. The difference of impression does not come from any want of sincerity or sense of certainty on the part of the pulpit orator. We may assume that the statement is set forth by the orator to the modern mechanic with quite as much sense of spiritual certainty as the similar statement was set forth to his father or his grandfather. It is the hearer who has changed—departed from the modes of thought which characterized his grandfather, and this same workman will, when he hears the scientific interpretation of lightning, listen with far more interest than his father or grandfather could have listened to an explanation of electricity generally as the result of natural law.



mind, and correspondingly diminishes the influence of theology upon this mind. Science thus moves all minds in one degree or another to a progressive appreciation of natural law, and consequently to a constantly progressive depreciation of supernatural interference. Theology has in general terms said to mankind: "The spiritual authority shall be the sole means of conferring truth." To this science has answered, and is answering: "With this authority you have repressed knowledge, stifled inquiry, interfered with progress. Notwithstanding this, I have inquired, I have gained knowledge, I have progressed. Each item of the knowledge gained has enabled me, in some measure, to lessen your own assumption of the spiritual sense, by appealing to the immediate conscience to confirm the knowledge by which you accept my conclusions. If, then, unquestioning reverence for dogma has proven insufficient even to you, if it has thus been weighed in my balance and found wanting in some part, with what justice can you ask that it shall still be held infallible because I have not been able specifically to test it in some other part; a thing which is fallible in part, cannot be infallible. The knowledge which I have acquired commends itself, not to class or to sect, but to all who will examine it. Its tendency therefore is towards unity; while the whole tendency of your spiritual sense is towards diversity."

In so far as these are impersonal results and tendencies of science they address themselves to the mind impersonally; they arouse none of those rancors which come from verbal argument; they move

with the silence of thought upon the mind. Whatever science thus tells cannot anger. It becomes persuasive, therefore, just as theology becomes dogmatic. If we treat these two great forces as contending forces, we shall see that science moves the mind by inducing new habits of thought ; that these are enforced by her acquisitions, and that they essentially put the mind out of accord with those things which belong to coercion. All this progress presupposes a decline in the value of intenser emotions as a means for ascertaining truth, and an increase in the unimpassioned and impersonal study of the forces of Nature. But in the largest sense, the movement cannot be called a contest, because, so far as science is related to it, it is an impersonal influence. It produces a gradual quieting of the feelings, a gradual subjection of ideals to examination, and thereby a gradual cultivation of the consciousness of man through the influence of his surroundings. The appeal is a persuasive one, and produces a mental condition which is just the reverse of that which was produced when the more intense emotions were dominant and misplaced.

## CHAPTER V.

### ADVANCED THEOLOGY.

THE salient features of the changes which science has wrought upon theology within the last twenty-five years are manifested by the variety of thought which prevails among theologians and by the more apologetic and less threatening tone which characterizes all theological discussion. But there are farther reaching influences of science upon theology which I think are not generally realized. These I shall now endeavor particularly to examine.

The decline of the theory of everlasting perdition as a penalty for unbelief has, perhaps, more than any other one direct circumstance, caused an unprecedented degree of freedom of discussion both within and without the Church, and as a result of this freedom there have arisen varieties of thinkers. These may be grouped into the four following classes :

The first embraces those ultra-conservatives within the Church, usually called strictly orthodox, who assail the findings of science generally as impious, and who regard the disciples of science as a body of men engaged in a wanton attack upon an established faith.

The second embraces those, mainly within the Church, usually called advanced or liberal thinkers who profess to welcome the discoveries of science and to regard them as instrumentalities by which their religion is to be purified and in some way confirmed.

The third embraces those called polemical sceptics, who exhibit more or less resentment towards theology and whose treatment of the theologian is characterized by a partisan and hostile spirit.

The fourth embraces those disciples of science who regard it as exerting an influence which moves the human mind steadily towards secularism. The foremost among this class may be said to treat all religious creeds as superstitions which in the progress of knowledge are destined to become obsolete.

Whilst, broadly, we have to consider the great movement of thought as each of these classes stands related to it, and as it affects them all, it is with the second and fourth classes—namely, the liberal theologian within the Church, and the scientific student without the Church—that we have more particularly to deal in indicating the ultimate of the movement, and I shall therefore treat the first and third classes only in an incidental way.

One frequently hears from the pulpit a setting forth of the high duty of seeking truth strictly for truth's sake. I am persuaded that the theologians who advocate this do not realize either the severity of the mental discipline required for such a course, or the farther reaching consequences upon theology or creed involved therein. To one who is called

upon in the pursuit of truth to forego lightly held ideals for the acceptance of others, the displacement is not usually very difficult. Indeed, there is often something pleasant in being able to supplant in one's own mind a crude sentiment by one less crude. When Emerson suggests that we should let the half-gods go from our lives in order that the whole-gods may enter, or when he tells us when we bid adieu to angels we make room for archangels to dwell within us, the suggestions seem comfortable enough; but when the searcher after truth finds corollaries which inevitably tend to dispel agreeable illusions, the ordeal of displacement in its first stages is a trying one. Every earnest theologian, from the very fact that he derives his theology not from examination but from authority, has sacred ideals which he will not allow to be disturbed by his reason; and, just as his inquiry after truth nears these ideals, his solicitude for their preservation discourages and forbids further investigation. However resolutely he may study and criticise the behavior of ideals in others, his own sacred prepossessions compel him to shrink from accepting a verdict which would relentlessly drive his prepossessions from him. This must remain so just as long as the theologian holds the premises for his theology as sacred. This, then, is equal to saying that, so long as a theologian is a theologian, the influence of science upon his mind cannot be complete. So long as he is a theologian, secular influences, by their persuasions, at the most displace only a part of his ideals. Whilst such displacement

illustrates the general tendency of science and in a measure indicates its progressive character, the immediate effect upon the theologian's mind is only partial. In his case it marks only an earlier stage of the influence of science. By a natural and a mental law from which there is no escape the search after truth for truth's sake is a thoroughly objective search, and a prerequisite is that the student at the very threshold of his search must realize that that for which he searches is not and cannot be attained by reverence or worship, that it lies nowhere than within the line of unimpassioned, colorless, and impersonal inquiry; inquiry that cannot even take account of sentimental wish,—in a word, that it is a search which precludes from the beginning the possibility of a theologic bias, and thus involves indifference to all theology. No one who holds any sacred prepossession whatever as a prepossession which contains within itself the assumption of an ultimate truth, superior to test, or which contains within itself the assumption of an ultimate truth which cannot be reached by reason, can by any possibility be thought of as one who can conduct unbiased inquiry in search of truth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The distinction usually made in the popular mind between theologians who are called liberal and those called conservative, assumes that the liberal theologian fully accepts the teachings of science, and that the conservative theologian totally rejects them. Such a distinction from the point of view of science is misleading. The most conservative theologian does not entirely reject all the findings of science, nor can the liberal theologian, as a theologian, entirely accept all those findings. Between the narrow and liberal theologian there is maintained a difference in the number of sacred

Into this dilemma is the advanced theologian thrown: He fails to realize that the influence which has induced him to displace a part of his conception of the supernatural is identical in character with the influence to which he refused to subject the remaining part of his like conceptions. He fails to realize that the conceptions which have become in part untenable to him, belong in the same category with those which he still retains. He fails to realize that the implicit reliance he places upon his remaining supernatural conceptions, cannot possibly have any higher value than has the like implicit reliance with which he once held his old prepossessions. He fails to realize, therefore, as a mental law, that a man cannot abandon a part of his ideals because they are contrary to his reason and yet retain others of them just as contrary to his reason, without inconsistency and contradiction. In a word, he illustrates the vagaries of one who, having expressed a determination to be governed throughout by a principle, proceeds to employ that principle in part to overthrow a set of theories, and then turns to overthrow that principle by insisting that some part of his theories is superior to it.

I referred, at the beginning of this chapter, to the great variety of opinion which exists among theologians. Amidst this variety the one thing which is prepossessions held. Meanwhile the degree of resistance with which the liberal theologian holds his fewer sacred dogmas may be, and sometimes is, quite as great as that by which his less advanced brother holds his more numerous dogmas. The fact that any theologian has any ideals which hold sacred precedence over thought and inquiry, follows from the fact that he has a theology.

common to all theologians who regard themselves as liberal, or who are so called, is the vagueness with which the remaining tenets of their faith are set forth. Whilst these theologians are specific enough in defining what they have abandoned, they become indefinite in defining what remains, and, with incongruity, term their remaining faith a "larger faith." But if we turn from their claim to the fact, we shall find that their faith has obviously not grown larger in the sense that it expresses a more comprehensive and specific creed, but only in the sense that it has become more vague and indefinite. It is impossible, on account of both this vagueness and this variety, to regard any one theologian as a representative liberal. Nevertheless, for the purpose of dealing with the causes of the transition of theologic thought, one instance from among the more advanced thinkers is perhaps quite as good as another, and I shall therefore select one in which an individual theologian, representing a school of the most advanced thought, has formulated an unusually definite statement of those tenets which are rejected by his school and a somewhat less indefinite statement than usual of those tenets which are still retained.

In a volume of Scotch sermons, which furnishes examples of the style of preaching that increasingly prevails among the educated clergy, is one entitled: *The Things Which Cannot Be Shaken*. In this the author sets forth the dogmas which have been relinquished by his school and those which are still retained. Speaking for the members of his school, he says:



"The sections of that theology which treat of sin and salvation they regard as specially untenable. These sections comprehend the following dogmas : the descent of man from the Adam of the Book of Genesis ; the fall of that Adam from a state of original righteousness, by eating the forbidden fruit ; the imputation of Adam's guilt to all his posterity ; the consequent death of all men in sin ; the redemption in Christ of an election according to grace ; the quickening in the elect of a new life—at their baptism, Catholics affirm—at the moment of their conversion most Protestants allege ; the eternal punishment and perdition of those who remain unregenerate."

The author, commenting upon this, says :

"These sections of the traditional theology of Christendom—originally elaborated by Augustine, amended and developed by the schoolmen of the middle ages, adopted wholesale by the Puritans—dominated the Christian intellect for centuries. They have ceased to dominate it. They no longer press on the minds and spirits of men like an incubus."

Having thus set forth the dogmas which are no longer tenable, the author proceeds to enumerate three others which he holds it to be the duty of man to believe :

First, "That there is a divine Being who is seeking to make men sharers in his blessedness by making them sharers in his righteousness."

Second, "That in the cravings of the human soul for communion with that power without it, which is the source of its being and the ground of its moral life, there is the pledge of its immortality."

Third, "That righteousness is blessedness."<sup>1</sup>

It will thus be seen that this liberal theologian abandons certain dogmas as untenable, whilst he insists that other dogmas are to be held from a sense of duty. The claim that it is man's duty to believe certain dogmas irrespective of his capacity to understand them—irrespective of his mental qualities and characteristics—lies at the foundation of all theology, and it is only by keeping this fact in mind that we can come to realize the inherent antagonism which exists between theology and science.<sup>2</sup>

Let us now look more specifically at this attitude of the advanced theologian and then at the influence of the scientific movement upon theology as a whole.

Can a theologian who, starting upon a line of search, has once lost his implicit reliance upon a part of the authority which before impressed him, be permanently overborne by a like authority in the further progress of his search without mental and moral contradiction? Can he, in other words, over-

<sup>1</sup> Scotch Sermons: *The Things Which Cannot Be Shaken*, pp. 195-214, New York, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> To illustrate this by the first of the three things which the liberal theologian sets forth as being the duty of man to believe, namely, "that there is a divine being who is seeking to make men sharers in his blessedness by seeking to make them sharers in his righteousness," we find that this duty is assumed to exist by the theologian, whether or not an individual can conceive how it is possible for omnipotent power to be moved by a wish and yet not be able to accomplish that wish. Manifestly that wish is not accomplished, for all men are not righteous. Thus it is made the fundamental duty by theology for all individuals to believe that which the constitution of the minds of some individuals makes it impossible for them to believe.

throw a part of a body of tradition by the employment of his reason and his knowledge, and yet refuse to apply his reason and his knowledge to that which remains? What the advanced theologian in this instance rejects, is the whole Biblical account of the creation, together with the theory of salvation involved in the creation and fall, the atonement and perdition. What he still maintains is that it is the duty of all men to believe in a dogma which teaches that there is a divinity clothed with attributes which he assumes can be appreciated by man otherwise than through his understanding; that it is the duty of all men to believe in personal and individual immortality, and that it is the duty of all men to accept sacred ideal precepts of conduct. Now if this advanced theologian can dispassionately study the record of his own experience—that experience which has moved him from the beliefs formerly entertained by him, and still entertained by the narrower theologian, to the place which he now occupies—he may discern that the tenets which his tardy brother still holds as sacred are the very tenets which he himself once so held; that he held them because they were the indoctrinated teachings of his childhood; that it once seemed as much his duty to hold them sacred as it now seems his duty to reject them; and that whilst he held them, he forbade reason to touch them. Moreover, if he will analyze all sacred tenets he will find in them an entire homogeneity, so that he cannot consistently divide them by characterizing a part as ignorant superstitions and another part as inscrutable but absolute truths. His abandoned

dogmas and those still retained, constitute together a concatenated body of faith, and the duty to believe in those still held is as authoritative as the duty to believe in those which are abandoned. The duty to believe in a traditional Creator who made the world by fiat in six days, to believe in the doctrines of atonement and salvation and in the depravity of doubt, by the whole theory of theology, belongs in the same category as does the duty of man to believe in the attributes of a personal God which cannot harmonize with his secular knowledge ; the duty to believe in a personal immortality, and the duty to hold as sacred certain ideal precepts of conduct which have been furnished by assumption. The whole theological claim, in a sentence, is that it is the duty of a man to believe certain dogmas furnished by tradition, irrespective of the constitutional capacity of that man to believe them. The claim of science, on the other hand, is that it is the duty of the individual man to profess to believe only that which he really does believe ; that a profession of belief in that which one cannot believe, cannot by any possibility be a duty ; and that not only is there no moral depravity in not entertaining belief in that which he cannot believe, but that it is dishonest to profess such a belief. The distinction which I have already named must not be lost sight of. Science does not question the right of an individual to believe anything he can ; it accepts the fact of his belief in that which he can believe as the plain result of a mental law ; but it does question the morality of any assumption which seeks to make it

the duty of an individual to profess to believe in that which he does not and cannot believe, and it does question the right of any authority which assumes to impute sin to any man for not so believing.

I am quite aware that the theologian is inclined to deny the specific charge that theology claims it to be the duty of man to profess to believe that which he cannot believe. Brought face to face with this as an intellectual proposition, he will doubtless repudiate it at once as involving a mental contradiction. But notwithstanding all theological denial, theology of necessity involves this demand. The doctrine of the sin of doubt, the claim of duty for belief in supersensual things which theology makes, cannot be separated from the claim that a man who does not believe an accepted dogma of the Church fails in a moral duty. Theology has recently come to claim a justification of its theory of the necessity of faith in dogma by pointing to the undeniable agreement of all students of science that ideal assumptions are necessary means to the progress of the search for truth. But the answer of science to theology is plain and simple. Science nowhere asserts belief in any ideal or postulate to be a sacred duty. Ideals science has and must have ; but they are secular, and it is never claimed that they can convince except in so far as they can persuade the normal mind. There can be found no instance in which science makes it a man's duty to accept any specific ideal ; she universally treats her ideals only as hypotheses. She never says to her

disciples: "You must accept these as verities"; she never says: "You may search for proof, but if you happen to find disproof you must reject it." The most she does say is: "You may assume them to be truths, but only for the purposes of test," for she depends upon the ultimate establishment of her truth by such test, which includes both proof and disproof, affirmance and elimination.

To consider only the attitude of the individual theologian towards theology is to consider but one side of the question. In a large sense each individual is but an incident in the movement of civilization. When we regard the impersonal aspect of the whole movement, we shall discern an influence which operates upon different minds with different degrees of impressiveness and persuasiveness. It is therefore necessary to keep this in mind in order to discover whether the individual theologian, more or less advanced, can stop his progress at any point which he may fix for himself as an ultimate. It is necessary to remember that science, which has hitherto influenced his mind, is itself movable in the sense that it is progressive, and that he who is influenced by it must, to the extent that he is influenced, move with it. We must ask ourselves the question whether the advanced theologian who, impelled by new surroundings, by the discovery of new facts, by falling into new habits of thought, has abandoned part of his old theologic dogma, can fix the exact point for himself where such progressive abandonment shall cease—whether he must not necessarily continue to be moved to further abandonment until

he reaches a point where this abandonment is complete. If we will hold in mind the twofold relation which the theologian has towards theology and which science has towards him and theology in general, we can easily see how this question must be answered. If the liberal theologian himself could only turn from confining his thoughts to his individual attitude towards theology and science, could bring himself to analyze the influence of science on him, he would find that in every instance the particular influence which has made him different from his narrower brother has been an influence of a secular and of a scientific kind ; that the difference between him and his brother is not one which in any respect involves sincerity or which can be explained by calling it a difference in spiritual insight, spiritual grace, or divine guidance, but that it is a difference which may be expressed as a difference between knowledge and ignorance. The advanced theologian has left his tardy brother behind, through the irrepressible influence of natural law upon his mind ; through the fact that he was impelled to substitute for his former conceptions of law, as supernatural, an acquired knowledge of law as natural. In this process the influence of these secular surroundings necessarily lessened his sense of reverence for much of that which was formerly sacred authority, but which he himself has since been impelled to overthrow. The difference, then, between him and his tardy brother is of the same kind, though in less degree, as the difference between an educated scholar who is acquainted with natural law and a

pious clod ignorant of that law. The scholar has less of the sense of worship because he has acquired more knowledge. The necessary corollary from this is, that piety is not only not the supreme means by which we arrive at truth, but may be, and often is, the means by which we continue in ignorance. It was through a partial subordination of the sacred sense that the advanced theologian became impressed with the superiority of relative and secular truth. It was the secular influence of science which impelled him to employ profane methods of inquiry and to accept profane impressions. It was this that constrained him to a relinquishment of his sacred impressions, and it is a remnant of these sacred impressions still dominating his mind that causes him to resist the further progressive influence of that science which must eventually overcome his remaining preconceptions. It is the influence of these remaining preconceptions upon his mind that prevents him from discerning the full scope of the movement as it affects all theology. When he consults his own feelings with reference to his own past, he has no difficulty in realizing that he himself has no desire to return to the ignorance by which he held his own fetiches, and that he does not look upon his present disposition towards those particular fetiches as involving any degree of moral or mental perversity—any quality of sinfulness. Confining himself strictly to the study of his own case, he regards the particular means by which he changed his views as virtues, and feels assured that it would be the highest moral perversity in him any longer



to profess specific faith concerning those dogmas which he has abandoned. Indeed, next to the reverence in which he holds his remaining idols, he probably values above all things the virtue of that secular knowledge by which he has overthrown old idols. His memory teaches him, in his own case at least, that if twenty years ago he had been confronted by an attack upon the theory which he then held of creation, atonement, and salvation, he would unhesitatingly have set down the attack to the wickedness and perverseness and moral depravity of him who made it. He now regards the overthrow of this very theory not simply with complacency but with a feeling of virtuous triumph. It is his firm conviction, in his own case, that the overthrow of his own tenets has been the result of his sense of duty, of his self-honesty, and of his loyalty to truth.

The obvious difficulty with him is that he cannot conceive, so far as concerns theology, that his sacred sense in itself is not any more a complete warrant for absolute truth than the sacred sense of a Mohammedan, or, in relation to science, that any one else may be moved in still greater degree by precisely the same secular means as those which have moved him, without involving mental and moral perversity in him who is so moved. He cannot conceive that by these identical means others than himself, following their convictions from their inquiries, governed by like moral and mental integrity, can displace from their minds, without committing a sin, those sacred conceptions which he continues to hold. He cannot conceive that influences which moved his

mind may move the minds of others more completely. He cannot conceive that secular knowledge can overcome supernatural seemings beyond the point which he has reached, without involving moral loss. As it is in the individual instance, so it is with all theologians who have been moved, in one degree or another, from implicit reliance upon any one phase of dogma, to the rejection of that dogma. They all mean to hold their remaining faith in supersensual dogma more firmly than they held that which they have abandoned; but there is that, inherent in the movement, which will not permit them. The advanced theologian may indeed believe that he holds what he now vaguely calls his larger faith, with just as much assurance as he once held his narrower faith; nevertheless an inevitable modification, unperceived by him, immanent in the movement, has taken place in the tenure of his remaining faith. Having himself been impelled to exchange the specific for the vague, the tangible for the ghostly, he cannot any longer grasp the new with the same feeling of certainty as that with which he held the old. The theologian, then, as science moves upon him, inevitably loses some of the intensity with which he held his narrower faith. Although he may still condemn the strictly scientific student, who has abandoned all reverence for the supersensual, as being the dupe of a narrow logic, his condemnation of this student of necessity, carries with it less of the imputation of moral depravity and sinfulness of nature than it formerly did. The very fact that he himself is justified in discarding

from his own mind the old theory of the creation, of the atonement, of salvation, and of the perdition of the unregenerate, makes it utterly impossible for him to retain all that degree of impatience and intolerance of opposing views which inhered in his earlier and narrower faith, and it is thus that there has been developed, unintended by the theologian, but as an incident to the movement, a general modification of the sacred sense, which, whilst it necessarily promotes the further progress of secularism, as necessarily impairs that of theology.

I shall now endeavor to take a brief perspective view in order to show how the sum of surrounding influences has progressively impressed the human mind. This perspective view will also enable us to mark more clearly the persistency of the progress towards secularism, and it will indicate how difficult it will be for any theologian, who has once left the initial sanctions of his earlier faith, to fix a place at any point in his progress, where he can resist the further influences of secularism.

Let us begin with mediæval Christian theology, say in the tenth century, when it had become firmly established in western Europe. If, in the light of modern thought, we will note the conditions which then existed, we shall easily realize that so long as the individual theologian confined his reasoning to accepted revelation, and made this reasoning govern all his relation to life and to death, it was utterly impossible for him to make large progress towards investigation into the laws of nature. Any questioning, to a mind so impressed, which proceeded

from human experience, and which seemed to conflict in the least degree with a revealed law as interpreted by authority, naturally struck the devout questioner's sense with horror. Whatever slight progress such a one might attain in investigation was conditioned upon his mental inability to perceive any antagonism between his faith and the product of such investigation. Meanwhile any questioning by a defiant mind obtained for the questioner only the anathemas of authority, and made him an object of the avoidance of mankind. Under such conditions and surroundings the only legitimate object of study was that of so construing the sacred word as to bring every act of life and fact of experience into harmony with it. The chief differences which arose in men's opinions were in regard to questions of a purely textual or expository character. The whole field of mental activity was restricted to the reverent contemplation of accepted tradition. With the field for mental activity thus confined, the few avenues which still remained open were fully occupied, and they developed the higher degree of metaphysics and scholasticism out of which grew the dogmatic work of the fathers of the Church. Up to the time of the Reformation the universally accepted view was that the Scriptures consisted of one compact body, handed down from age to age by reverent tradition. The Church was the witness which professed no more or less than to take that which it had received through inspiration, and which was preserved by miracle, and to hand it down from age to age. For the world at large there

was but one duty : that of passively accepting the interpretation of the Church. Even exegesis was allowed only to the few, and was exercised within the narrowest bounds under the direction of central authority. But the Church, with all its power, could not wholly stay that tendency which is inherent in ideals to flower into diversity, and so the Reformation followed. The Reformation itself did not go beyond claiming the individual right to interpret the Scriptures, and this claim with Luther was narrowly construed ; for, having taken the one step, he was no less arbitrary in its limitation than were the popes. Whilst he opened the door, he was clearly in favor of limiting the number of those who should enter. But the door which Luther thus opened could not be closed. The Reformation was not the act of one man ; it was a revolution born of the spirit of the age. The world of western thought, rather suddenly released after having been repressed for centuries, exhibited an activity in the field of interpretation which carried with it a freedom in material matters, and pressed civilization forward at a rate not dreamed of before. The right to interpret revelation, intended to be confined to the clergy, could not fail to become enlarged into a lay as well as a clerical right, to investigate and measure tradition by surroundings—to test truth by reason and experience. The right of a Protestant priest to dissent from the authority of the Church involved the right of other Protestants, priests and laity alike, to dissent from the interpretations of the Protestant priest. The right to dispute the authority

of the Church of Rome thus involved the right of an investigator to dispute all authority. That the right was at first understood to apply only to the traditional word, indicates merely that the movement was then in its initial stage. Thereafter it became only a question of time when not the construction of revelation alone, but the truth of specific revelation, should be subject to challenge.

Turning from this earlier stage, we may now note the more pronounced influence of modern science and modern surroundings upon the modern theologic mind. A given scientific truth moves at first rather slowly upon the common mind. At its announcement it encounters the opposition of the Church; but gradually, through the operation of that law by which simple and natural explanation tends to supplant complex and supernatural theory,<sup>1</sup> it obtains recognition and displaces some specific supernatural conception. As scientific truths accumulate and become recognized, there follow efforts on the part of theology to adapt them to the received word. Failing in this, there is a resort to efforts at adapting the received word to the new discoveries. These efforts are called reconciliation. They slowly fall into neglect, and as the new facts of science take

<sup>1</sup> What Sir William Hamilton calls the "Law of Parsimony," a principle identical with the well known maxim of the Nominalists, called Occam's Razor—"Entia non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem." If we translate "Entia" as signifying Powers, we may recognize this maxim as setting forth the practical principle that man cannot be required to believe anything of which there is no evidence; or, more broadly, that man cannot be required to believe anything as supernatural for which there is a natural explanation.

their place and fit that place, they displace some part of the old theologic conception. The active thinkers of the Church, however, do not usually take the conclusions of science, even when they become established, with complete acknowledgment or unqualified acceptance. The degree in which these thinkers do accept is usually measured by a decline in hostility and a diminution of attack upon the special discovery. Meanwhile theologic notions become partially moulded to the new truths, and these grow in recognition until a refusal to accept them becomes a badge of ignorance, and to this extent the new truths become the fixed possessions of mankind.

From this brief survey, if we contrast the earlier with the later influences, we cannot fail to be impressed with the immense dominance of theology and the insignificance of spontaneous thought which characterized the earlier period; and, conversely, with the growing dominance of spontaneous thought, and the corresponding waning of theology, which marks the present age. These conditions are essentially correlative. Contemplating the two extreme periods together, they present to us a wonderful antithesis; but if we leave out the period immediately following the Reformation, and that which is embraced within the past fifty years, we see that the movement from the earlier to the present stage has been a very gradual one. It has, however, been progressive in the direction away from the supremacy of theology, towards the supremacy of secularism. The movement, considered as a whole, has certain

clearly marked characteristics. Regarding it as a contest, it has been one between uncompromising forces. It began in the unquestioned supremacy of a dictatorship which was assumed to be sacred and spiritual; it began in the theory that it was man's duty to subject his whole intellect to the unquestioning acceptance of that which he could not comprehend. It began with the theory that it was degrading to be mentally persuaded of any physical fact which contradicted priestly authority. All this arose from the sincere assertion of the dignity of assumed absolute truth and the sincere denial of any value for relative truth.

It was under these conditions that science had its beginning. In its earliest stage it was weak because it was overborne by this authority. It grew gradually, and, as it was challenged at every step, it could justify its progress only by illustration after illustration which compelled unwilling recognition. Its inherent power then was its persuasive force, fortified as it progressed by each new illustration of its truth. All that it gained it kept, and at each gain theology lost something. It moved along until at length it has become a co-ordinated body of truth. The kind of truth which is born of science we call relative, because we know it as it is related to us; we determine its value as it fits our acquired knowledge and our surroundings. It is a working-day truth, but, fitting its place, it tends to displace that sort of assumed truth which jars with it. It is guarded by no shrines, upheld by no authority. It never seeks to impress its findings upon us beyond



our understanding. It is definite and specific, and by this definiteness displaces the symbol, the allegory, the parable, and the fable. It is supported by no special school, monopolized by no sect; it has no extraneous supports; its authority lies solely in its power to convince. Its different parts unite with each other as chemical cohesion unites atoms. It grows by fitting its place, and, fitting it, holds that place.

Now, in looking back to the beginning of our survey and contrasting it with the present, let us ask again what has been the force of this kind of truth, as contrasted with the force of the sacred assumptions of theology? To illustrate the difference between the two, we may note again the influence of scientific thought upon the advanced theologian. Its superior force has been such that it taught this theologian himself to turn from his own traditional and sacred authority, and to become convinced by the teachings of palæontology that the age of the world is not that which was furnished by the sacred authority. It impelled him to relinquish as mythical the whole Biblical account which set forth a created Adam who sinned and fell and carried the whole race with him in his fall. It established in his mind a conviction of an antiquity for man which is wholly inconsistent with that furnished by Sacred Writ, and it thus impelled him to deny the authority of that Writ. It led him to infer, from all the vestiges of the earth's occupancy by man, that man began at the lowest stages of existence, and that his course since then has been upward and not downward. From this secular

source the theologian has gained knowledge which has made it impossible for him any longer to accept the sacred account of the beginning of the race in paradisaic innocence and perfect wisdom, and the subsequent fall of that race into a degree of sin from which only the sacrifice of a god could redeem it.

In the light of this let us now look at its influence as it concerns the advanced theologian's theory of duty regarding his remaining faith. If this theologian is challenged by his narrow brother upon the question of duty to believe, the narrow theologian, from his point of view, will naturally say that under the theologic principle it is his advanced brother's duty to repress secular knowledge; that it is his duty to believe in Sacred Writ as that Writ is set forth, notwithstanding it may seem incongruous and incomprehensible; that Sacred Writ is higher than secular knowledge, and that therefore he should reject such knowledge, and that he should hold sacred above profane teaching—in a word, that he should seek to guard his past ignorance by renewing his adhesion to the faith in the Scriptures as he once held that faith when ignorance dominated him. How utterly unjust this demand would seem to the advanced theologian needs only to be stated to be realized. Indeed, to him obedience to such demand would be mental impossibility. The very effort in the direction of its accomplishment would involve a breach of what to him is the highest moral duty—the duty to preserve his mental integrity. What, then, would be his answer to such a demand? What

could it be? Simply that, so far as concerns his intellect, such an accomplishment is impossible, while, as concerns his moral nature, the effort should not be asked of him. With what better justice, then, can this advanced theologian turn to the disciple of science who has passed beyond the theologian's stage of investigation, and ask that disciple to reject his reason, his understanding, his knowledge, and commit himself to dishonesty in order to accept, or rather to profess to accept, that which lies beyond his understanding and conflicts with his present knowledge?

Thus the whole difference between the theologian called liberal and him called narrow lies in the extent to which the liberal theologian has accepted part of what theology has regarded as the lower order of relative or secular truth, and, so accepting, has displaced what theology assumes to be the higher order of sacred truth. Meanwhile the liberal theologian applies the principle only in part, for, looking backward, he can easily see the mental movement by which he is separated from his ignorant brother, but looking forward, he fails to perceive the same movement operating in the same manner more progressively upon those who have gone beyond him. It is this failure which blinds his mind to the fact that he himself cannot remain where he is if he is to continue responsive to the impersonal influences progressively operating upon him. The whole general difference between the theologian of to-day and all antecedent theologians of the narrower type is expressed by the substitution of relative secular

truth for the assumptions previously regarded as sacred truth. The whole difference between the theology of to-day and the science of to-day is that science recognizes as a principle the superior value of this relative truth and the inferior value of sacred seemings, whilst advanced theology still holds to the superior value of so much of the assumed sacred truth as has not yet been specifically displaced.

The issue between theology and science is the issue between authority and persuasion. The position which science has taken on this issue is unequivocal. It is that, no matter what sacredness may be claimed for a proposition, there exists nowhere any legitimate power which can make it the duty of any individual mind to profess to believe what that mind is incapable of believing; that there exists nowhere any legitimate power which can make it the duty of any individual mind to profess to define that which it cannot comprehend.

I have said at the beginning of this chapter that the theologian who expresses the determination to follow truth for truth's sake does not realize the full import of his determination. Following truth for truth's sake involves fundamentally the recognition of the higher moral principle that any man who accepts a supernatural dogma as sacred cannot be said to be making an unbiased search. When the theologian fully recognizes this he will cease to be a theologian. Then for the first time he will have no idols obstructing the pathway of his search. Then for the first time can he be said to have begun to seek truth for truth's sake.

Returning to the substance of the three propositions which the typical advanced theologian sets forth as "Things Which Cannot Be Shaken," we have a statement of what remains of his creed. It is as follows: First, "that there is a Divine Being who is seeking to make men sharers in his blessedness by making them sharers in his righteousness"; second, "that in the cravings of the human soul for communion with that Power, there is a pledge of its immortality"; and third, that "righteousness is blessedness." I shall briefly indicate the attitude of secularism to the first two of these propositions, and reserve for a more elaborate examination the third, which, I take it, involves the question of ethics.

No one can justly challenge the right of any man to set up for himself the postulate that there is a Divine and Omnipotent Being who is trying to make men sharers in his blessedness by trying to make them sharers in his righteousness; and this irrespective of any incongruity involved in the mental effort to conceive of an Omnipotent Being who has been trying to do what he has not been able to accomplish. Similarly, no one can justly question the right of the theologian to entertain a belief that God's ways are utterly incomprehensible, and at the same time to declare definitely what those ways are.<sup>1</sup> The theo-

<sup>1</sup> As Morley pointedly puts it: "Religious people who warn you most solemnly that man who is a worm and the son of a worm cannot possibly compass in his puny understanding the attributes of the Divine being, will yet—as an eminent divine not in holy orders has truly said—tell you all about him, as if he were the man who lives in the next street."—*On Compromise*, London, 1888, p. 158, n.

logian may do this on the principle that any man, from the constitution of his being, can entertain what seems to him an intelligible notion of supersensual attributes no matter how inconsistent or incongruous that notion may seem to others, and science can interpose no objection to this, because the principle is altogether in accord with the scientific view that such a one should entertain his own convictions, since they are to him necessary to his mental honesty. They are the resultants of the consensus of his being. Moreover, no one can justly challenge the right of any man to seek to persuade others to any view which he really believes to be the highest expression of truth. Indeed, so believing, it may be conceded to be his duty to seek to persuade others; but that which science does deny is that the theologian has a right to command others to adopt his method of reasoning upon his premise, or in any way to accept the conclusion which he holds. A duty which negatives the assumed duty by which the theologians seek by the exercise of authority to move others, is that immediate, personal duty of those others to be true to their own convictions, to reserve for themselves the right of denying propositions which to them involve mental contradictions and inharmony with their sense of truth, no matter how sacred those propositions may be assumed by the theologian to be; and, moreover, to insist generally that no man can justly be required, even if it were possible, to contort his reason in order that he may acquiesce in what seems to him a mental contradiction. It is not the right

of seeking to persuade others that is called into question by science; it is the assumption of a power to dictate over and beyond persuasion which is challenged.

The relation of science to the dogma of the immortality of the soul rests upon a similar basis. Science cannot tell, nor does it profess to tell, whether or not a man has a continued individual conscious existence after death. The extent of its profession is that it furnishes some data derived from this life and from experience, from which different minds draw different inferences. The question concerning the weight of the reasons for and against such continued consciousness is irrelevant, or at least secondary, when compared to the question of the right of each mind to be persuaded. Theology cannot compel a man's belief when the consensus of his being is against it. Theology cannot make it the moral duty of a man to profess to believe that he is immortal if his intellect does not acquiesce in such belief, any more than it can make it his duty to disbelieve that he is immortal, if his intellect does not acquiesce in such disbelief. This is only stating a law of mind which declares that that alone is believed to which the mind assents. It is only stating a fact that belief is not a matter of wish, but depends upon the consenting intellect, as that intellect is acted upon by surrounding circumstances. If, therefore, we have an instance in which one cannot believe in individual continuance after death, and another in which one can so believe, we must realize that neither of these instances in

itself goes one step towards proving a fact, or towards warranting any exercise of authority or threat or effort at compulsion. If disbelief in continued existence should ever prove to be the disbelief of a fact, then by the operation of that principle of the innocence of honest error, the disbeliever's normal relation to immortality cannot be altered by his incapacity, whilst in his mortal state, to believe in it. This law is commonly enough recognized with reference to secular fact; it is only when theology comes to assume fact, and to clothe the assumption with sacredness, and to seek to exercise authority regarding it, that the perception of the law becomes blurred. The fading remnant of the theory of the fall of man from paradisaic innocence to sin is only an illustration of this. If from the constitution of one's faculties, conferred upon him by Nature, he does not believe in continued existence, and if after death such existence proves his mistake, there is no rule of justice, as justice is understood by man, which can debar him from the enjoyment of that existence, since his mistake was due to faculties which were conferred upon him and which he did not create. And by every moral law he is quite as entitled to receive and participate in that after life as he would be to enjoy a fair sunshine after an erroneous prediction of a storm. If the error is the product of a self-honest mind, there can be no more sin in the mental error in the one case than in the other. It is only when one professes to believe that which he does not believe that his mind is dishonest and his nature sinful.



Secularism, then, does not in any instance call into question the theologian's right as an individual to express convictions which are really his, so far as those convictions concern him, nor does it call into question his right to seek to convince others of the truth of his convictions, whether those convictions involve contradiction to other minds or not ; nor does it in the least impugn his sincerity. What it does question is the moral power and right of theology to seek to enforce a profession of convictions upon any one who does not, and by the constitution of his mind cannot, entertain such convictions. What is more, it does insist upon the moral obligation of every individual who cannot entertain belief in a given dogma, to hold it as his duty, his highest duty, to resist all efforts to compel his profession of such dogma.

If it shall ever become generally recognized that there are things which one cannot know in the scientific sense of knowing, we shall cease, as generally, to regard it as man's duty to profess a belief which he cannot entertain. If it shall ever come to be realized that where one cannot entertain belief in specific supernatural propositions, and that no moral deterioration attends disbelief, it must surely follow that he who does not believe in continued individual existence, who does not believe that he can conceive of definite attributes for infinity, cannot justly suffer punishment for his mental uprightness. In such a consummation all questions of definite attributes for a divinity and all questions of personal immortality become purely matters of individual opin-

ion. Thereafter the effort to convince the reason of the existence of these attributes or of this immortality will be a very different thing from seeking to impress upon the mind a sacred duty to believe where the reason is not convinced.

## CHAPTER VI.

### QUALIFIED SCIENCE.

**I** HAVE hitherto endeavored to illustrate the difficulties which advanced theologians encounter in their self-imposed task of seeking truth solely for truth's sake. Difficulties of a similar nature, but differing in degree, are encountered by many of the advanced scientific scholars. We have seen, in discussing the theological movement, how the theologian, promising to himself an unobstructed search, moves forward in his investigation only to be interrupted by some sacred reservation or prepossession which still dominates his mind. There are scientific scholars who similarly proceed upon the same path, and who, although they progress to a point far beyond that which the theologian reaches in his investigation, nevertheless suffer a like arrest by the persistence of their still cherished and more or less reverent sentiment. If, as Archbishop Whately has said, "it makes all the difference in the world whether we put truth in the first or the second place," it makes all this difference to the scientific scholar as well as to the theologian; and a point selected by the scientific inquirer for staying inquiry cannot be a resting-place for that inquirer any more than the point selected by

the advanced theologian can be for that theologian. The same kind of influences which have moved the theologian from his old faith to the place he now occupies, must as inevitably and certainly move the scientific philosopher from any intermediate stopping place he may select on the road of unbiased search. The methods by which both theologians and scientific scholars maintain a place for prepossessions are entirely similar, in that they are essentially theologic rather than scientific in their character. I mean that the reasonings of each one, in seeking to maintain that there is a point beyond which inquiry may not go, are theologic rather than scientific in their character; when analyzed, they will be found to rest upon postulates which belong in the theologic category. They are reasonings which proceed from a feeling more or less vague, that man, however free he may fancy himself to think, must by some assumed mysterious necessity still retain some sentiment of reverence regarding that which he does not and cannot know—a more or less worshipful feeling regarding the inscrutable. So it happens that there are scientific philosophers who, whilst they have denied the value of all efforts at making definite attributes for the unknown or the unknowable, still hold a degree of reverence for that which they cannot define. Whilst they have meant to overcome the specific fetiches of tradition through the exercise of their reason and by their experience; whilst they have meant to exorcise from their own minds their respect for the authority and for the metaphysical method by which introspection was formerly as-

sumed to impart the highest sense of certainty ; whilst, in a word, they have meant to sweep away all the sanctions of faith in supersensual things, yet they nevertheless turn within themselves at last to find a sentimental regard for something which their knowledge does not confirm to them. They still retain a feeling which is more than secular respect for the vague object of a fruitless search. It is here that they continue to preserve a remnant of the spirit of theology.

The hope of any reconciliation between theology and science, or the hope for the indefinite continuance of an active sacred sense or a religious instinct, besides involving us in a solecism, inevitably presupposes the indefinite continuance of that antagonism between the intellectual faculties and the moral obligation which characterizes all theology. Inexorable science overthrows all reverence for those ideals which are specifically of a theologic kind, on the ground that science cannot confirm such specific ideals by knowledge. Upon what principle, then, can this science justify a reverent regard for other ideals concerning the supersensual, simply because such other ideals concern the ineffable? If science did approve such moderate reverence, it would be an approval of the substitution of a less crude fetich for one more crude, and if this were all it had to teach, it would itself be but the agent of a new and more mystical Messiah.

Perhaps no two men will agree exactly as to what the term religion implies. For the purposes of this discussion, however, it will be sufficient if it be understood to mean any feeling of reverence whatever

that any individual might have for his ideals, or for the ideals of another or others, or for any assumed authority regarding supersensual things. Anything less than this could scarcely by any possibility be held to fall under the definition of religion, since righteousness of life as expressed in correctness of conduct, if unaccompanied by any sense of reverence regarding supernatural things, could be nothing more than that which is usually designated as an ethical cult. In a strictly ethical cult anything like reverence for an indefinable power, so far from being a necessity or a duty, would be superfluous and impertinent. From all I have been able to discover, then, religion, whatever else it may or may not signify, invariably implies some sense of reverence for the supersensual, or, in other words, some sense of reverence for that of which science tells us we can have no knowledge beyond what may be rationally inferred from the sequence of phenomena. Religion may therefore be said, in one degree or another, always to signify an effort to develop some sort of finite formula for the infinite, and that, inherent in this effort, there is a sense of reverence for the formula sought to be developed. Most people, indeed, use the terms religion and theology as convertible. The definition I have given to it, as always implying a reverent feeling regarding a power beyond the mind's reach, is, for the purposes of this discussion, all that is needed.

Let us now examine the attitude of two of the most advanced philosophers regarding the continuance of religion.

Mr. Leslie Stephen, in a series of acute and search-

ing criticisms, makes this concession: "Whatever happens, the religious instincts of mankind will survive and will find some mode of expression. Whether they take such a form as is expected by the followers of Comte, or return to the ancient modes of thought, they have a vitality independent of any existing organization."<sup>1</sup>

The grounds for this concession are not to be found in the other parts of Mr. Stephen's argument. Indeed, the whole force of his general argument appears to negative them, since the legitimate inference which is to be drawn from all he elsewhere says is that this religious instinct, repressive as its influence has been upon human thought, obstructive as it has been to the advance of knowledge, has, notwithstanding its alliance with power, exhibited a steadily declining influence; that it is becoming more and more impotent to withstand the persuasions of modern knowledge; that it is growing more and more incapable of convicting its own possessors of truth. It has been the heart and soul of theology, but it is slowly fading—gradually dying. That an instinct thus delineated in general should be specifically declared to be an eternal instinct, is warranted neither by him who thus specifically declares it, nor by any of the illustrations which history affords. The whole lesson of the past teaches us that, just as knowledge touched and affected this instinct, mankind became divided into sects; just as knowledge progressed in its effect upon this instinct

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Free Thinking and Plain Speaking*, by Leslie Stephen, London, 1873, p. 7.

subdivisions of these sects multiplied ; ideals became thereby less sacred and more secular ; by their very multitude and variety they produced contradiction between different sects, and thus still further counteracted the reverent sense with which these ideals were held. In the further progress of this movement the sacredness of the ideals came to be questioned by many of the individual holders of them, and, when examined with less reverence, they were found to contradict themselves even in individual minds. It is by the progress along this line that the modification of the sense of reverence indicates the gradual subsidence of the religious instinct.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has more elaborately discussed the relation between religion and science, with the purpose of showing that there is to be a reconciliation between them, which implies a scientific confirmation and the indefinite continuance of a vital religion. His postulates are, that there is an element of truth in all religions ; that, although religion is irresistibly driven by criticism through the progress of science, yet this progress itself gives the religious sentiment a continued sphere of action ; that beliefs are in the constituted order of things ; that they are everywhere present ; that they are of perennial growth, and that they are therefore needful accompaniments of human life.<sup>1</sup> In examining Mr. Spencer's argument it will be necessary to keep clearly in mind this important distinction : that the study of the influence of a given faith upon its pos-

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer's works, *First Principles*, New York, 1880, pp. 108-122.



essor—that is, its subjective influence—is a very different thing from the study of the faith itself, objectively and impersonally considered. Whatever estimate one may have in other respects of Mr. Spencer's broad claim that every religion contains elements of truth, this claim cannot justify the conclusion that there is to be a perpetuation of any given form of religion or a reconciliation between science and religion. Nor can the circumstance that religions of some kind or another have always existed warrant the conclusion for the future indefinite continuance of any religion. Moreover, neither the past existence of religions, nor the fact, if it be a fact, that all religions necessarily have some element of truth in them, proves nor tends to prove the verity of any given body of faith touching supersensual things. The degree of objective truth in a religion can only at last be measured, not by the felt fitness of creed to the individual, nor by the felt fitness of creed to a given age, but by employing those tests which demonstrate the harmony or inharmony of creed with the degree of secular knowledge which we have. This is a process by which all faith in supersensual things is constantly modified in the progress of advancing knowledge. The progress so attained indicates at once the superior power of secular knowledge over sacred assumption and the insufficiency of reliance upon the assumption of the superiority of intuition or upon submission to assumed sacred authority. The progress so attained determines that however the theologian may seek to measure the value of his creed by the reverence

which he entertains for creed, or by his disposition to submit to authority which assumes to control creed as such, the student of science can deal with creed only in a scientific way. He must regard reverence itself as a bar to inquiry, as an obstruction to knowledge. He must note specifically how what is called the faculty of reverent intuition produces in the given individual different estimates of the value of the products of intuition furnished at different times, and how it is therefore that intuition is constantly bearing varying fruits. He must, therefore, make his final test of the value of this intuition by a study of the manner in which the products of intuition as a whole accord with or contradict the facts of that knowledge which exhibits a constant tendency towards influencing different men's minds to unity of conclusion. In other words, the scientific mind judges the value of the intuitions concerning supersensual things by the harmony or inharmony which the fruits of these intuitions exhibit toward the fruits of human knowledge. Science generally cannot allow to intuition (as expressing a mental principle) a power to defy or contradict such relative knowledge as tends, by its inherent force, to impel general conviction. It must be obvious to any one who studies the tendency of modern thought, that relative knowledge is growing and producing a body of secular truth by its inherent persuasiveness. There is nothing in all this which presupposes the slightest degree of dogmatism, or of the assertion of authority in science. The whole progress is one which is purely persuasive

in its character. We may admit that, so far as any individual possessor of a specific faith is concerned, his faith may have a value to him independent of any scientific test, in so far as it expresses his individual sincerity and affords him consolation. But, however an individual's religion or religious sense may thus be justified to him, or however he as an individual may regard it as expressing to him his highest idea of truth, or however it may be held as a warrant for the presence of a co-existent creed, or as a force in a measure fitting the needs of those who believe—all these considerations together cannot have the slightest value in determining the question of whether a creed, objectively considered, does or does not contain truth. This can be determined, so far as scientific determination is possible, only by the impersonal tests which science puts upon that creed itself. Nor can any individual's belief in a given dogma furnish any correct data from which to infer a logical necessity for the indefinite continuance of religious instinct or the reverent feeling. The broad scientific question is not how this or that individual is affected by his creed, what earnestness or aspiration a creed may confer upon him who has it, or how creed may have suited a certain condition of the past; but how creed itself accords with the present state of relative knowledge and how it is affected by the progress of this knowledge. Only as it answers these questions can it have any scientific value beyond the incidental or functional value found in the fact that it confers individual constraint upon or consolation to its possessor. The holder of such creed

assuredly does not furnish anything that can persuade the scientific mind of its verity by setting up the earnestness with which he holds it, or the fact that it exerts a restraining influence on his conduct, or that it affords him consolation. The estimate, therefore, which science sets upon creed, objectively considered, is that, just so far as it does not answer the scientific test of knowledge, it is and can be nothing better than opinion. It can have no greater weight than any secular opinion and concerning as it does subjects which are beyond the grasp of the human mind, can be nothing more than the exhibition of a mental phenomenon consisting of a reflex of the individual imagination. Whatever its import may be to the individual, to science it is but a mode of individual feeling. Creed, then, or belief touching that region of which we can know nothing definite, has no more claim to reverence from a scientific mind than has every-day ignorance. In the progress of human thought it must be the case in the future as it has been in the past, wherever the hand of ecclesiastical or other authority is removed from the ideal-forming faculty of man, relative truth tends to overcome supernatural assumption. Whenever the judgment, fettered by the exercise of authority, is released, knowledge increases; and with this increase, the ideal-forming faculty expresses its ideals with increasing variety and diversity, and in this process they inevitably grow more and more secular. As this has been the movement from the beginning, always in one direction notwithstanding lapses and interruptions, we are warranted in saying

that if Mr. Spencer means by religion anything that implies reverence for the region beyond which we know nothing, there can be no possible reconciliation between religion and science. The two forces which by their inherent qualities move in diametrically opposite directions, cannot be thought of as allied forces or concurrent forces. The tendency of science and that of theology generally are intrinsically antagonistic.

Whilst science has nothing to do beyond the inferences which it can make from the behavior of natural law, it has all to do with the theory of those who claim to derive absolute truth from the region beyond the mental reach. Its largest progress depends upon the maintenance of the principle that no hypothesis shall be held so reverent as to forbid inquiry. Its past progress has been marked by inroads upon the sacred images and traditions of theology. Its success has been measured by its capacity to test, by the means of human knowledge, every assumption of the theologian that it could reach. Science maintains not necessarily a disposition, but an inviolable right, to deny every assumption beyond its reach, and it has everything to do with the assumptions of all who profess authoritatively to determine the conditions and qualities beyond its immediate reach ; it has everything to do with challenging those who assume to teach, with the greatest assurance of certainty and definiteness, the absolute and the infinite. But it imminently behooves the disciples of science to see to it that they do not undertake to employ assumptions which they thus

deny to others. These disciples cannot, by any scientific warrant, give way to their sympathies with individuals who struggle to make the supersensual dominate the real—cannot hold out to them the faintest hope for a reconciliation between forces so inherently antagonistic as those of science and religion. For my own part, I cannot think that a supernatural religion, because it has hitherto existed in the world, must continue indefinitely to exist, any more than I can believe that religious feeling, because it has existed in an intense degree must continue to exist with like intensity. The historic fact to which none of us close our eyes is that this instinct has declined in a ratio inverse to that of the growth of science and knowledge, and there is therefore no more reason for its indefinite continuance than there is that the mammoth, because he once flourished, ought to still exist; or that a particular faith, which was once a more complete expression of this sense, should continue in its vigor. The more reasonable inference is, that the progress through which grosser fetiches have been supplanted by milder, must continue, modifying the religious sense as knowledge of natural law becomes more and more definite, until that sense shall become so attenuated as to lose all its importance.

Mr. Spencer does indeed recognize the progressive power of science to remould and modify forms of belief. It is on this very account that it becomes the more necessary to examine the reasoning by which he sets forth "a permanent peace" between a force which, by its inherent quality, so pro-

gressively modifies, and another which is so progressively modified. "Permanent peace," he says, "will be reached when science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are approximate and relative, whilst religion becomes fully convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute."<sup>1</sup> Religion, according to Mr. Spencer, then, ceases to trespass upon the province of science only when it ceases to claim any possible knowledge respecting the domain of the supersensual. This imports that it must cease to claim any right to assert with authority any attribute respecting mystery; but when it so ceases, I see no other inference than that it must cease to be religion. In the elaboration of his argument on this point Mr. Spencer says that "religion and science are necessary correlatives," and that "they stand respectively for two antithetical modes of consciousness which cannot exist asunder. A known cannot be thought of apart from an unknown, nor can an unknown be thought of apart from a known. And by consequence neither can become more definite without giving greater definiteness to the other." We may perhaps better appreciate the illusion involved in this by asking what kind of definiteness it is that the unknown imports to the known or the known to the unknown. We can realize that our consciousness of things known is a consciousness of specific things, but we must also realize that all consciousness relating to things which are unknown can be merely a consciousness of our ignorance regarding

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, p. 107.

them. To hold that we can have any other kind of consciousness of a thing unknown is to hold that we can know that which we do not know. Whatever value Mr. Spencer's proposition has in the abstract, seems to me to be lost in its application ; and when we reflect that all consciousness of things unknown must be nothing more than consciousness of ignorance, we must see that such consciousness cannot be a rational basis for any sense of reverence. If there is a sense in man by which he holds his ignorance in reverence, then it is a sense which is at variance with his scientific mind. Just so long as this sense continues to exist in him, mental harmony is impossible. If, then, religion has any necessary element of reverence in it, a reconciliation between it and science is impossible.

In another part of Mr. Spencer's argument, he holds that man will really be more religious by reason of his very incapacity for knowing the Ultimate Cause than he could otherwise be. On this point he says :

"This " [that is, the position that man is incapable of knowing the Ultimate Cause], " which to most will seem an essentially irreligious position, is an essentially religious one—nay, is *the* religious one, to which, as already shown, all others are but approximations. In the estimate it implies of the Ultimate Cause, it does not fall short of the alternative position, but exceeds it. Those who espouse this alternative position make the erroneous assumption that the choice is between personality and something lower than personality ; whereas the choice is rather between personality and something higher. Is it



not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will as these transcend mechanical motion? It is true that we are totally unable to conceive any such higher mode of being. But this is not a reason for questioning its existence; it is rather the reverse. Have we not seen how utterly incompetent our minds are to form even an approach to a conception of that which underlies all phenomena? Is it not proved that this incompetency is the incompetency of the Conditioned to grasp the Unconditioned? Does it not follow that the Ultimate Cause cannot in any respect be conceived by us because it is in every respect greater than can be conceived? And may we not therefore rightly refrain from assigning to it any attributes whatever, on the ground that such attributes, derived as they must be from our own natures, are not elevations but degradations? Indeed, it seems somewhat strange that men should suppose the highest worship to lie in assimilating the object of their worship to themselves. Not in asserting a transcendent difference, but in asserting a certain likeness, consists the element of their creed which they think essential."<sup>1</sup>

A warrantable inference to be drawn from this is, that not only does religion depend upon our ignorance of the ultimate subject-matter believed, but that it depends upon the degree to which that ignorance is felt; that is, religion is to be vivid and reassuring in ratio as he who believes, comes to realize the completeness of his ignorance of the subject-matter of his belief; that he alone can be said to be truly religious who can thoroughly realize that he

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, p. 109.

does not and cannot know any attributes whatever regarding the object of his reverence.

If, as Mr. Spencer suggests, it is "possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will as these transcend mechanical motion, and that we are totally unable to conceive of the qualities of that higher mode of being," it is not only unscientific, but unfruitful of any moral result, to clothe our conclusions with reference to the fact of such an existence beyond the bound of our reason with any such sense of reverence as the term religion implies.

Mr. Spencer's claim, therefore, that we establish a complete basis for reverent feeling by entirely removing that basis which all theology claims for religion, and substituting an airy nothing, seems to me like the apotheosis of ignorance. It is but a paraphrase of the sentence of St. Paul in his sermon on Mars Hill with a new meaning: Him whom we ignorantly worship, him declare we unto ourselves.

"In dealing with alien beliefs," he says, "our endeavor must be not simply to refrain from injustice of word or deed, but also to do justice by an open recognition of positive worth." In application of which he adds: "We must qualify our disagreement as much as may be with our sympathies." I cannot but conclude that Mr. Spencer has extended the sympathies which he entertains for individuals who hold alien beliefs, to the beliefs themselves, or rather to the believing quality generally; and that from this sympathy he has been led to relax the rigor of that logic which usually characterizes his writings.

Scientific justice requires that whatever sympathy we may feel for an individual who entertains an alien belief, we must not permit this sympathy to interfere with the scientific examination of his belief. Science requires the employment of strictly scientific methods in its test of truth. In such examination its processes are entirely impersonal, and it is by this that the most effective moderation of our own judgment as well as the moderation of the judgment of others becomes possible. Mr. Spencer has observed that what we commonly regard simply as a due respect for the right of private judgment is really a necessary condition for the balancing of the progressive and conservative tendencies, and that it is therefore a spirit to be fostered. It seems to me that this respect for private judgment is a necessary condition which has even much larger import than that which Mr. Spencer thus attributes to it. There is an impersonal and spontaneous power in science, operating by its fruits, which inevitably moderates the feelings and the judgment of him who comes under it. A subsidence of mental irritation results in every instance in which there is removed from the mind a sacred assumption of absolute truth, and substituted therefore a recognition of relative truth; and science, coincident with its process of disciplining the judgment into moderation by this substitution, impresses the mind with the superior value of the relative truth which is accepted, and with the inferior value of the sacred assumption which is displaced. This modifying influence upon the mind of the scientific student of itself creates a disposition in

the scholar towards secularism. The things learned, the acquired secular knowledge, inevitably impress the student's mind with the superiority of secular fact and relative truth over the sacred assumption by theology of absolute truth. As regards the results which come from the impersonal influence of science, it is not of so much importance whether or not we as individuals concern ourselves in fostering moderation of judgment, since this moderation enters the mind as a result of acquired knowledge rather than by any individual premeditated purpose. So far as concerns moderation of judgment, science eminently takes care of itself. It exerts its discipline not only upon the theologic mind, but upon the mind of the scientific scholar as well. By persuading the minds which it reaches to accept relative truth, it dissuades them from that which was before assumed to be absolute truth. It thus gradually moves all minds which it so reaches, from a feeling of superiority concerning that which we do not and cannot know, to a disposition of reliance upon those truths which fall within the domain of acquired knowledge. By its inherent power, science modifies men's sense of assurance concerning that which they do not and cannot know, and by this modification quiets the sense of mental irritation regarding all who still hold such sense of assurance. If, as Mr. Spencer expresses it, it is sometimes hard for the disciple of science "to listen calmly to the futile arguments used in support of irrational doctrines and to the misrepresentation of antagonist doctrines." If "it is hard for him to bear the manifesta-

tion of that pride of ignorance which so far exceeds the pride of science." If such a one feels "indignant when charged with irreligion, because he declines to accept the carpenter theory of creation as the most worthy one,"<sup>1</sup> let him reflect that, although his direct counter-argument can do little else than keep alive the hostility which such ignorance manifests, yet there is on his side an impersonal influence far more potent than verbal argument, springing from that progressive movement whereby science gradually displaces mental irritation concerning those who hold opposing views, in gradually displacing from the mind the ignorance by which that irritation flourishes.<sup>2</sup>

Respect for private judgment, then, so far from owing its growth to individual fostering, is a development resulting from the acquisition of relative knowledge; it is an incident of science which grows progressively with the growth of science. It indicates the ever-increasing pressure of science upon the domain of theology; the progress of the persuasiveness of relative truth and the decline of the assumptions of absolute truth. It influences the minds of

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> A homely illustration of this is afforded by the account of two men who wrangled for a long time over their theories of steam as a natural force. Being utterly unable to agree, they separated, each betaking himself to the study of the steam-engine in actual operation, with the purpose of confirming his own view. Each thus learned from the behavior of steam itself the natural law which governs it. Meeting afterwards, they resumed the discussion with a calmness of spirit which nothing but the objective lesson of each could have conferred, and thus they soon reached a common conclusion.

different men just to the degree that scientific knowledge influences those minds. It has increased in the mind of the liberal theologian irrespective of his wish, and without his knowledge of the manner in which its influence operates; and just to the degree that it has displaced certain theologic assumptions by impelling a recognition of natural law it has become more active within him. The impersonal influence of science which vivifies this respect for private judgment, has grown with accelerated speed, not only by each new acquisition of science, but by such new acquisition with the sum of all preceding acquisitions added. The decline in the sense of veneration for the assumptions which are thus progressively displaced by science is inevitably coincident with the progress of science. The moderating temper of the judgment is marked by the ratio of the progress of relative knowledge. A sense of reverence having relation to the supersensual domain is operated upon by the law of evolution, by the progress of science, in a way that impels the mind from the indefinite towards the definite, by which indefinite conceptions become displaced by definite ones; by which the definiteness of knowledge becomes gradually recognized as superior to the indefiniteness of theology. As this mental progress is accomplished, the eristic element gradually disappears from discussions and from expressions of conviction, and the judicial element takes its place. In this progress, therefore, may be discerned all of those immanent influences which moderate man's judgment, and the operation of which

upon the mind is usually unpremeditated and undesigned. Thus is justified the statement that it is not from individual intention and design, but by the influence of knowledge itself, that the human judgment is moderated, mental irritation allayed, and the sense of assurance concerning supernatural assumptions diminished.

If we may infer the future growth of this impersonal influence from its past progress, we may, I think, with reason, expect that as an influence it will more and more discipline the minds of those who come into contact with science; and that the advanced scientific student will become enabled to maintain a thoroughly philosophic attitude towards faiths to which he cannot give the least assent. He may be enabled to maintain an unreserved respect for the right of opinion in him who holds an opposite faith; he may have a philosophic regard for the one holding such faith as an individual, and at the same time preserve a determination under all circumstances rigorously to test that faith by the impersonal tests of science. He may come thus to demonstrate that the most complete sympathy with man as an individual, and the most complete respect for his right of private judgment, are consistent with unqualified dissent from his opinions. He may further show that there must follow a general decline in the tenacity by which those opinions which do not answer such tests are maintained. To science alone we must look for the development of these influences in modifying men's minds. We must remember that it is not from the

scientific student as an individual that we must expect this result, but from the impersonal discipline of science itself. With the result thus accomplished it is inevitable that there can be no sense of worship regarding the unknowable, and this is simply saying that there can be no sense of reverence for our ignorance. Whenever a man realizes the fullest import of his ignorance as ignorance and nothing better, he must cease to accord reverence to it. He begins to realize this as he sees the operation of ignorance in others; by ceasing to reverence it in them he comes gradually to realize the operation of the same ignorance in himself, and thus ceases to reverence it in himself. There can be no religion under the prevalence of this influence in any sense in which the word religion can reasonably be understood.

If scientific students of to-day manifest any weakness it is in making concessions to theology at this point. When they shall have achieved an unserved disposition to search truth for truth's sake, it will be when they shall have frankly and without reserve accepted the limitations of the human mind as a fact from which there is no escape. They may indeed continue thereafter, without inconsistency, in efforts to extend these limitations, but if they do it will be by scientific and not theologic means; it will be by holding any hypotheses which they make, not as obstructions to further search, but as subject to scientific test. In this attitude they will recognize that all they can directly know, in any scientific sense in which the term knowledge is employed,



concerning an inscrutable power is that it is a power greater than man and beyond the mind's reach. Whatever else can be learned of it must be by the inferences drawn from its behavior as manifested in impersonal natural law, and these do not and cannot imply any demand for worshipful reverence. When all this shall have been thoroughly realized, the mind of the modern scientific student can have room for no sense of reverence such as is implied by the term religion. In his further progress he will realize that every step taken by those disciples in science who are behind him is bound to be marked by a modification of their sense of reverence for what they do not know. The scientific scholar so disciplined, looking from the present forward, must conclude that the same process of modification through which he has passed must not only operate likewise upon others but must progressively continue so to operate, since it is a result, not of an individual's personal purpose, but, as I have said, of a power immanent in science. The coincidence, then, between the modification of feeling concerning opposing opinion or opposing faith and the growth of science will become manifest, as it is inevitable, and it will continue in its ever-widening reach towards the universal recognition of secularism. This recognition will be confirmed by the highest moral law which determines that it is every man's right to believe concerning those things of which he can have no knowledge, that which under the law of his mind he does believe. Thereafter all question of duty to believe will rest upon the right to believe. This

involves the further conclusion that, wherever any body of men calling themselves theologians shall in any manner seek, by the assertion of authority, to infringe upon the right of the individual to believe that which he does believe, those comprising that body will thereby violate the right of private judgment and transcend their own moral duty.

Science recognizes the paramount right of each individual to make ideals, to exercise his normal, ideal-forming faculty; it denies with equal force that it is the duty of any individual to accept the ideals of others concerning that which is not and cannot be known. From the fact that there is such a right, and from the denial that there is such a duty, there arises the universal law of mental freedom, and from the fullest exercise of this freedom spring diversities of ideals among the individuals who make them. Under the full play of this law there cannot be conceived the existence of an authority to dictate a creed. There can therefore be conceived no duty to accept a creed; there can be no legitimate claim of sacredness for a creed, no attribute of reverence for an ideal, no reason for any sense of humility with reference to an ideal. When science shall have established this degree of recognition of right and duty there will have disappeared the last vestige of reverence for what we cannot know; we shall have ceased to place any value upon efforts at fruitless guessing concerning what cannot possibly be known, or upon any efforts at seeking words to express guesses concerning the ineffable. We shall have realized that such guessing tends only

to limit the clearer possessions of the mind, the better means for arriving at realizations of such truth as the mind in its best state is capable of reaching.

I cannot believe that a movement with such constant factors and such growing force as this, can cease short of the ultimate to which it points—the unrestricted freedom of thought, the mental and moral integrity of man. When such an end is reached, the relations of man in this life will be learned from what we know and can know of this life, and not from assumptions of what may be in another world. That this presupposes the entire abolition of sacred authority, I think there can be no doubt. In presupposing the freedom of every individual to form for himself his ideals, there is involved the principle that the ideals of one shall not be pressed upon another as verities or things to be revered.

Although, so far as any one may look into the future, an entire extirpation of reverence from all minds may not be practically realized, and there may and doubtless will remain for a long time corners of the earth in which ignorance and superstition will continue to dominate the minds of men, still, these considerations do not mar the inference that the progress of science must mark the ever decreasing religious sense. Theology may not entirely disappear, but it must indefinitely decline—perhaps on something like the line of the asymptote which indicates its constant tenuity. It is reasonable to conclude, from a survey of the historical trend

of this movement, that theology, thus declining, will cease to have any important obstructive power over the future development of knowledge, and this conclusion is confirmed not only by a retrospective view, but by a study of the respective characteristics of theology and science, their inherent qualities, and the influence of each on the other. It seems to me that the practical inference from this is the constantly growing importance of science as a means of obtaining truth, and the corresponding decline in the importance of theology as a means of supporting authority. Added to this is the persistence and the ever-widening influence of the law of the diversification of natural faculty, as the authority of theology is removed. This movement does not depend upon individual preference and cannot be much accelerated nor much retarded by argument: it represents the silent operation of natural law.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ETHICS.

THE difference between the theologic and the scientific theory of ethics is that the former assumes the precepts of ethics to originate from a supernatural source, and to consist in a definite code which, being sacred, must not be analyzed or examined with a view of testing its value; and which being perfect, cannot be changed. Science, on the contrary, holds that the developed laws of conduct, are the outcome of human experience, present and past, and infers that the true method of ascertaining the content and value of these laws is to study that human experience from which they are developed, and to test their value by the constant application of them. The methods of science, it will be observed, are mainly inductive, but not wholly so. Although ideas of conduct are in part derived from *a priori* reasoning, yet science, in treating the product of this reasoning, keeps in view the fact of the modification of the original instincts by present and antecedent experience and by heredity, and holds that, whatever phase of *a priori* reasoning is employed in forming notions of morals, the value of such notions must be determined by *a posteriori* tests. Nor is it necessary for the purposes of the scientific study of

conduct that we should press our inquiry into the ultimate origin of instincts, or what may be called initiative motives of conduct. We know from observation that Nature confers differences of faculty and differences of mental quality among the mass of individuals constituting the race; that she produces the intellectually active and the mentally slothful, the capable and the incapable, and differences of sex, age, and condition; and that all of these differences necessarily enter into the correct estimate of conduct. Science accepts these differences as facts, and, studying normal man in the light of them, draws inferences from these differences as they are exhibited by the behavior of individuals and classes of individuals. From these inferences, in turn, she measures the normal office of the different emotions, and constantly tests the value of the laws thus inferred by their application to further practice. But however instincts may be thought to have originated, rules of conduct must of necessity be applied to actual life, and their fitness is to be judged by their fruits.

The theologic assumption that a code of ethics is perfect and sacred, involves the further theory that its precepts are necessarily statical—that is, have within them no element of change or progress. The scientific theory, that the principles of ethics are corollaries of the changing and developing conditions of the human race, involves no such necessity; on the contrary, the fact that laws of conduct are to be inferred from mobile conditions imports that they are incomplete, and that for this reason, they may undergo continual improvement.

That there is a necessary conflict between these two theories is obvious. The theologian appreciates in part the fact of this antagonism; I say in part, because he cannot as a theologian realize its full import.<sup>1</sup> It is for this reason that theology persistently charges all the efforts of science to test, by exact examination and application, the sacred precepts of conduct set forth in theology, with narrowness—with a failure to comprehend the “largeness of the subject—with an utter want of that wholeness, completeness, and comprehensiveness” which theology claims for itself. But the theologic claim

<sup>1</sup> The theory of the immutableness of morals, their statical character, is not always confined to the theologian, although secular minds do not draw such inferences from it as the theologians do. It is, for instance, one of the most prominent of Buckle's theories, and, as has since been amply demonstrated, one of his signal fallacies. He says :

“ All the great moral systems which have exercised much influence, have been fundamentally the same ; all the great intellectual systems have been fundamentally different. In reference to our moral conduct, there is not a single principle now known to the most cultivated Europeans, which was not likewise known to the ancients. . . . Since civilization is the product of moral and intellectual agencies, and since that product is constantly changing, it evidently cannot be regulated by the stationary agent ; because, when surrounding circumstances are unchanged, a stationary agent can only produce a stationary effect. The only other agent is the intellectual one ; and that this is the real mover may be proved in two distinct ways : First, because being, as we have already seen, either moral or intellectual, and being, as we have also seen, not moral, it must be intellectual ; and secondly, because the intellectual principle has an activity and a capacity for adaptation, which, as I undertake to show, is quite sufficient to account for the extraordinary progress that, during several centuries, Europe had continued to make.” Buckle's *History of Civilization* ; New York, 1885 ; volume i., pp. 130-131.

of wholeness for its method does not bear analysis. It cannot be a comprehensive way of arriving at the quality of a law to confine one's attention to only one phase of it. To measure human conduct merely by the intention of the actor, is certainly a less adequate means of arriving at the quality of the conduct than to study it with reference not only to the intention of the actor but also to the effect and consequence of the act. To infer the qualities of a given act from the motive of the actor and leave unconsidered the consequences of the act, may seem an ideal method, but it cannot be thorough. Science interprets all given rules of conduct by principles universally recognized for the interpretation of secular law. In so doing it inquires into both the motive of the actor and the qualities of the resultant act. It treats the motive of the actor as but one element by which to estimate the value of conduct, and it first eliminates from the study, as far as possible, the feelings of the student. It therefore determines that one who confines his examination to motives alone or to consequences which proceed from motives alone, or who magnifies one of these elements or the other, or who refuses to examine the action, interaction, or reaction as these subsist between motive and act, cannot be said to be making a comprehensive study of the problem. Moreover, science determines that no study of the principles of conduct can be adequate in which the student does not rigorously pursue the objective method—that is, the method whereby one can study the influence of conduct upon the actor and upon



the subject of the conduct, and beyond this the influence of act, actor and subject upon others—and science deduces the general laws of conduct from these studies as a whole.

Now it is just this kind of study that the theologian does not, and—from the very fact of his sacred prepossessions—cannot pursue. By the whole theory of theology he is precluded from this course. His faith in the divine origin of his precepts forbids such a study. His method of treatment can never be objective; and as long as this is the case his study must lack that comprehensiveness and consistency which come from a study divested of sacred sense. By the value which the theologian places upon his creed at the outset of his effort at study, his power to estimate conduct objectively in its wholeness is warped and distorted. On account of this bias, his estimate of the conduct of others rests far less upon what they do than what they believe. He gauges conduct generally by his feelings. He justifies his own conduct from the conscious honesty of his belief in creed, and he concedes complete honesty only to the motives of those who are in accord with him in his belief; thus the mental tendencies that lie behind all theologic efforts at investigation move theologians to estimate the quality of acts by their accordance with a formulated creed. The theologian, assured that his own intentions and the intentions of his class, spring from a sacred sense, becomes impatient of any secular study into the indirect results of those intentions. The certainty which he feels regarding his creed impels

him to infer the virtue of all the fruits which result from it. When, with this bent of mind, he undertakes to estimate the conduct of those who are out of accord with his faith, his tendency is to determine the evil influences of an act by assuming viciousness of motive. His measure of his own conduct, or of the conduct of those who agree with him in faith, is by an entirely different standard from that which he employs in measuring the conduct of others.

There is in all theology a narrowness and a personality of which it cannot divest itself, which it exhibits in every estimate it makes of conduct, by determining that the acceptance of a given creed shall be the first condition by which correct behavior shall be gauged. In the application of this theory by different sects, the vagary and narrowness of valuing conduct by the earnestness or honesty of faith in a specific creed is illustrated throughout history. The most violent persecutors have manifested such earnestness and honesty quite as emphatically as have the martyrs who suffered from persecution; and if such earnestness were an adequate measure of the virtue of the conduct which proceeded from it, then the tortures of the Inquisition are thoroughly justified. It must be seen that the whole difference which the theologian makes between the conduct of the faithful and of the unfaithful, arises from sacred estimate of dogma. The reverent sense which determines for him that behavior is good or bad is a sense which determines it good or bad as the faith of the actor is in accord or out of accord with his

faith. It was entirely by this rule that the Romanists of the Inquisition sought to justify the torture of those who did not profess their creed. By the same rule the tortured, if moved by religious conviction, fortified himself to endure torture. The conviction of each was that he was pursuing the truth, and that he who was opposed to him was immoral. To the martyr who suffered death the Inquisitor was the vicious agent of Satan; to the Inquisitor the recalcitrant heretic was the stubborn enemy of God, who could do nothing that was good.

I have given instances drawn from the Inquisition, but these instances illustrate a principle which is not confined to Romanism. Two theologians may entertain antagonistic dogmas, yet each bases his faith implicitly upon the theory that his God will not suffer him, seeking truth with a pure heart, to err in anything necessary to his acceptance of a divine revelation. A disinterested observer must see that the diverse results derived from the reliance of each of these men upon the same God cannot be harmonious truth, and that the conviction of each of the truth of his dogma, arising as it does from an intense feeling that such conviction is implanted in him by God, cannot be a warrantable conclusion. Indeed, it was the diversity arising from this individual sense of assurance that often interfered with the authority of the Church itself. Even in the highest supremacy of the Roman Church so troublesome was this interference of individual assurance in conflict with the ecclesiastical authority, that disciplinary steps of the severest kind were resorted to

in order to make examples of the schismatics.<sup>1</sup> The character which inheres in the assumption of church authority is not confined to Rome. It extends to all ecclesiastical bodies, but in spite of ecclesiastical authority individual assurance continues to express itself in individual theologians where individual feeling is intense. There is thus within the body of theology itself an inherent solecism—a conflict for the expression of the sacred sense between the organized power and the individual which tends towards division and antagonism, and which must continue as long as theology continues. Meanwhile, with the individual theologian, however liberal he may hold himself to be in conceding an opponent's motive to be honest, he inevitably limits his liberality by assuming that his opponent's view is founded in delusion. He limits the scope of his examination into the value of his opponent's conduct by dealing with the opponent's motives as delusive, and by inferring therefrom that this opponent's conduct cannot be wholly correct. It is on account of this inherent antagonism that all theologic dealings with ethics are inadequate; for as the mode of interpretation of conduct becomes variable, dependent upon sense of sacredness, it lacks the value which belongs to the correct study and application of principles.

<sup>1</sup> The Mystics and Illuminati, who flourished during the period of the Inquisition, furnished excellent examples of the antagonism between individual intense faith and the authority of the Church. One such example is graphically set forth in the history of the trials of Francisca Hernandes and Francisco Ortiz. (For details of this see Lea's *Religious History of Spain*, pp. 259-273.)

Now let us look more particularly at the relative force of the theologic theory as contrasted with the secular as these are related to the modern movement of ethics. Just as the difference between the theologic and the scientific theories widens under the influence of growing knowledge, the divergence of science and theology in relation to the estimate of conduct becomes gradually and increasingly manifest to a larger number of minds. The scientific treatment of ethics progressively supersedes the theologic in accordance with the law of evolution which determines all movement to be from the indefinite to the definite—to be from reverently accepting a vague and sacred authority with reference to ideal rules towards the study of actual behavior. There is thus a movement from reverent regard for ideal precepts to a study of principles as these principles are exhibited by the motive for acts and the consequences of motive in act, and in this movement may be discerned the whole difference between the ethics of science and the ethics of theology. Theology, with whatever precision it announces precepts of conduct, manifests a constant preference for the indefiniteness of the application of these precepts, and this is because that sense of reverence which is inculcated by theology is of itself repressive of that inquiry and investigation into behavior by which alone the definiteness of the application of precepts can be reached. In order to procure such definiteness, therefore, the elimination of the sense of reverence from the mind of the student is the prime essential of adequate study. It is on this

account that practical morals can never by any possibility be correctly derived or correctly interpreted from the assumption of a code of ideals such as the theologians have conceived to be the true and only foundation of ethics. Nor can the laws of conduct be correctly ascertained by treating morals as stationary, as the theologians do. It is in the very nature of things that conduct itself must develop with the development of mankind and that the principles of correct conduct must be progressively learned by inquiry and by the growth of the data concerning which inquiry is made.

It is not an easy matter for one to hold the reverential sense in subjection to reason, in such a manner as to make candid investigation possible. With men who are constitutionally emotional—that is, with those in whom the emotions are dominant—the subjection required is impossible. The conclusions of this class, therefore, with reference to the value of non-reverent investigation, cannot have much weight, since just in proportion as they associate conduct with faith in mysteries it is impossible for them to conceive of or to study conduct apart from forms of belief. The very fact that their precepts are ideal is to them the reason for their reverence for these precepts. The fact that these precepts, when careful application of them is attempted, prove inapplicable to real life, does not in the least lessen the reverence of those who hold reverence for them, because there is inseparably linked with their ideal precepts faith in the supersensual generally, and hence a disposition to make reverent contemplation

dominate reality. Nor is the respect for ideal rules entirely confined to highly religious natures. It is often found in moderately religious minds, and sometimes even in the minds of persons who fancy themselves to be of the most liberal type. Thus there are those who will freely admit that the precise object of their reverence is totally incongruous with the precise object of reverence held by others; and, moreover, that those others may hold their antagonistic views without in the least affecting the propriety of the faith of either. Whilst by such theory they will imply that agreement cannot be the duty of persons holding different conclusions, and that it would be manifestly wrong to demand unity of conclusion among men concerning creed, yet these same theorists are utterly oblivious of the intellectual dishonesty involved in their proposition—utterly oblivious of the corollary that two conflicting opinions touching the supersensual cannot by any possibility be expressions of one truth. Nor can such theorists realize the larger corollary that the sense whereby each holds a dogma at variance with that of another is a sense incapable of determining absolute truth.

Besides this class there are those who believe themselves entirely secular, and who fancy that they do not need any faith whatever, and that they have none concerning supersensual things; they do not for themselves value faith as an element of restraint in their own conduct, but hold these very ideal precepts in high value as in some way a sanction for the conduct of the masses. We can have as little reason

to expect from this class a dispassionate investigation of the conditions upon which ethics rest.

For science there remains but one course : to hold that passionless investigation is the condition for the exercise of reason and the guidance of action, and to hold that only by such investigation can things be rightly classified with reference to their essential natures. This requires the elimination of all reverence from the mind of the student. It requires him to criticise the Sermon on the Mount by the same standards as those which he would employ in examining the precepts of Confucius, of Socrates, of Zoroaster, or of any other sage—to test these precepts rigorously by their actual bearing upon conduct and not in the least by any sentimental estimate. In pursuing such an investigation respect for the varying opinions of others is a prime essential of fairness ; but this does not involve the least reverence for such opinions. Indeed, it imports the absence of reverence by implying the equal right of each man freely to pursue his investigations with a passionless interest in his search for truth.

Let us now endeavor to examine, by the secular method, those precepts of conduct, blessings, and imprecations set forth in the teachings of Jesus. We shall have to deal with them by a mode of construction recognized as applicable to subjects which are allowed on all hands to be entirely secular ; that is, we shall have to construe them as, for instance, legislative enactments and the Common Law are construed. This mode requires that every rule of law shall be interpreted by its words, its context, its spirit, and



by the effects arising from its application, and this involves the employment of all these means separately and of all of them together. In undertaking the investigation we must assume that the precepts attributed to Jesus have been correctly reported and translated—that they are, in fact, his precepts. All questionings, therefore, which have disturbed exegetical scholars as to the place and manner of delivery, whether upon a mountain or upon a plain, together or separately, whether they involve the acceptance or rejection of miracles, become irrelevant to the investigation, since the examination simply concerns the rules themselves, the purpose for which they were uttered, and the actual application of them.

For the sake of convenience we may classify the precepts and sanctions given by Jesus as follows :

First. Those relating to alms-giving and assistance.

“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.”<sup>1</sup> “That thine alms may be in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”<sup>2</sup>

Second. Those enjoining the duty of repressing solicitude for one’s temporal future.

“Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . . Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew, v., 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vi., 4.

your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these . . . Shall he not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith ? . . . Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat ? or, what shall we drink ? or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? . . . But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." <sup>1</sup>

Third. Those condemning the acquisition of wealth.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." <sup>2</sup> "Blessed be ye poor : for yours is the Kingdom of God." "But woe unto you that are rich ! for ye have received your consolation." <sup>3</sup>

Fourth. Those relating to non-resistance.

"But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." <sup>4</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew, vi., 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vi., 19.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew, v., 39, 40, 41.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke, vi., 20, 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, v., 5.

Fifth. Those enjoining the duty of the cultivation of universal love.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>1</sup> "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."<sup>2</sup> "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."<sup>3</sup>

In considering words and context as part of the means of interpreting the sayings of Jesus, we find that, wherever these sayings deal with human conduct to furnish precepts for it or to pronounce blessings or imprecations upon it, the language is so precise as to leave no doubt whatever as to the meaning. There is no tinge of orientalism or hyperbole or exaggeration, nor is there any of that ambiguity from which contradictory meanings may be drawn. In studying the spirit and reason likewise, there is no difficulty in reaching a conclusion as to the motive of the author. Whatever room for varied inferences there may be in other parts of the gospels, the only legitimate inference to be drawn from the injunction of Jesus to give unto him that asketh, is that he meant unqualified alms-giving; that, when he taught that such giving should be in secret, he did not mean to impress the giver with the duty of studying the indirect influence of the gift upon the recipient or upon society; that when he directed his followers, if struck upon the right cheek, to turn the other cheek also, he meant to enjoin the practice, not

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke, x., 27.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew, vii., 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, v., 44.

only of non-aggression, but of actual non-resistance ; that when he instructed them to take no heed of the morrow, but to follow the example of the lilies of the field, he meant to deprecate all solicitude for their temporal future ; that when, in connection with his imprecation upon the rich, he warned his disciples not to seek wealth, but to resist impulses in this direction, he meant to urge them to turn their minds towards poverty rather than towards wealth ; and that, when he directed his followers to love their enemies and to pray for their persecutors, he meant to enjoin the practice of universal love, without difference of kind, or respect to person or condition.

We must not fail to bear in mind that these words were spoken by one who, as all the context shows, was impressed with a messianic mission, and who was therefore setting forth rules applicable to an order of things not then existing. He believed his return, the second coming of the Messiah, to be imminent, that with this coming ideal goodness was to be realized ; non-resistance was to do away with oppression ; free and unrestrained giving by those who possessed, was to go on until all the blessings of life should be enjoyed in common, and the strife for supremacy, and all that is begotten of strife, was to cease. The natural incentives of life were to be displaced by preternatural incentives ; in a word, the whole order of things then prevailing was to be supplanted by a supernatural order, in which heaven upon earth was to be established, and so the millennium was to prevail.

But the world as it then was has continued to be ;

and ideals of conduct, however sacredly held, must needs be measured by practical tests. If the decrease of poverty, involving as it does the decrease of misery, and if the increase of prudence, involving as it does the increase of well being, lie in the natural order of things, it is plain that they have not been the result of efforts to realize ideals which tend to encourage poverty or deprecate thrift. To give to him who asks, measuring the gift by the disposition of him who asks; to lend to him who would borrow, measuring the disposition to lend by the disposition of him who would borrow; nay, more, to give the cloak where the coat only is asked—such acts inevitably lower the standards of life; for in the degree that they are practised mendicancy grows, independence is deadened, thriftlessness is encouraged, and as a consequence crime flourishes to the deterioration of the race. Nothing, under the tests of modern experience, is more clearly proven than that mistaken generosity weakens the incentive by which honest industry thrives. It is a fact which every one must realize who can divest his thoughts of the glamour of sacred precepts.

The theologian, when thus confronted, replies that the injunction to give unto him that asketh does not necessarily restrain the giver from considering the circumstances of him that asketh. But when we examine the rule itself, we can find no possible warrant, either in its words or in its spirit, for such a construction. The desire of the recipient is explicitly made the whole ground of the gift; it is by the soul of the rule that inquiry is implicitly

discouraged. It is of the essence of the precept to justify the gift entirely by the motive of the giver. The rule, then, both explicitly and implicitly, discourages inquiry concerning the gift, and discredits that prudence which requires, as a condition of giving, a knowledge of the conditions not only of the individual recipient but of the class to which he belongs. Definite and certain as is the form of expression in the rule, it is of necessity vague in application. Upon no theory can the theologian justify the precept. If professional mendicancy be a vice, no reasonable being can affirm that acts tending to increase this vice can be virtuous. Giving to another because he asketh, lending to him who would borrow because he would borrow, are acts which do increase the vice of mendicancy ; and that the giver or the lender holds sacred the precepts under which he acts does not make the consequences of his acts in the least degree less deplorable. Nothing so beguiles the enthusiast as reverence for an ideal, and he resists nothing so strongly as an attempt to apply a practical test to that ideal. Thus what the theologian holds as perfect, the secular student cannot but regard as visionary. The theologic rejoinder, that the precepts are not specifically to be obeyed, means nothing definite. The theologian cannot say of a rule telling us to give to another because he asketh, that it is to be construed as meaning that we should give unto another, not because he asketh, or only in part because he asketh. He cannot say of a rule enjoining upon us to take no heed of the morrow, that it is by any construction to favor prudence or

foresight, or that it is only in part that we are to take no heed of the morrow. No interpretation, however liberal, will fail to show that the direction of the precepts, not only by letter but by spirit, is towards discouragement of incentive. The theologian cannot say of the precept which tells us, when struck on the right cheek to turn the other also, that it has concealed somewhere within it something other than non-resistance—some underlying principle merely of moderate self-restraint from aggression—for the precision of the rule itself excludes all equivocation. The theological mind fails to realize this, because its reverent regard for its precepts prevents it from studying the law of cause and effect, notwithstanding the fact that this law persistently asserts itself throughout real life. The theological mind cannot conceive that in actual life there is a duty transcending the sacred injunction to give unto another that asketh—a duty not only of refusing to regard the wish of a mendicant as the supreme reason for giving, but of ascertaining the effect of the gift upon the recipient, upon the class to which he belongs, and upon society at large. The more keen the feeling of goodness possessing the ignorant social reformer or indiscriminate giver of alms, the greater is the danger that his giving and the giving by his kind will be misdirected and will thus create and perpetuate the evils of mendicancy, for just as giving from such motive becomes systematic, gifts become the life and being of the impostor, and they convert precarious mendicancy into a permanent profession. When this kind of ideal giving was formulated in

legislation, as it was in England by the enactment of the Poor Laws, an immense increase of pauperism followed ; pauperism became systematic—a burden upon all the industries and activities of civilization, continuing as long as the emotional legislation remained unchanged. It tended to interrupt the progress of civilization. To the extent that the mass of mankind are learning this relation of cause and effect, they are learning it from secular experience and scientific investigation, not from the worship of ideals : and to the lesser extent that theologians are learning it, they, too, derive it from science, not from theology.

There is one characteristic of these ideal precepts : they are all alike definite in statement and vague in application. However, one may conceive them as applicable to ideal conditions, certainly they do not fit real ones. We are impelled to the conclusion that he who uttered them felt himself on the threshold of a new kingdom in which the supernal should supplant the earthly ; that the hearers to whom they were uttered also implicitly believed that the kingdom of heaven was presently to be established upon earth, and that in this kingdom ideal conditions should rule supreme—conditions under which there should be no necessity of heeding the morrow, or of solicitude about food or drink or clothing ; under which no such resistance as exists all about us should ever be encountered ; under which there should be no need of incentives for wealth-getting or prudence ; under which the poverty Jesus had blessed would establish the ideal equality of man.



Upon this hypothesis, and upon this only, the precepts, blessings, and imprecations of Jesus can be explained. By this light we can readily see how his thoughts were directed to the ideal side of the subject, and how he felt no need to consider the tests to which rules of conduct must submit in a world that is not elysian. I lay particular stress upon this hypothesis, which is derived from the context and surroundings; for to suppose that Jesus meant his precepts for the world as the world then was and still is, would be to suppose that he did not appreciate the force of natural law and the consequences of ignoring that law. He could not have realized that the tendency of his advice was to lead men away from independence and into conduct certain to make them dependent and wretched; to lower them morally and physically; to undermine the very foundation of morals. For in the world as it is constituted, improvidence, by a law which cannot be overcome, entails dependence upon the providence of others. Non-resistance, practised as a rule of life where wickedness and aggression exist, must inevitably mean the triumph of wrong over right, of the wicked over the good, of the strong over the weak.

The question, I repeat, is not one of literalness in the construction of these precepts. They cannot be taken in any sense as rules of practice. They are actually contradicted by every effort at application. However liberally the theologian may attempt to construe them, the spirit which they inculcate, the direction in which they lead, make them interfere with the very virtues which they are meant to pro-

mote. For nearly nineteen hundred years the world has been struggling with these sacred precepts in the vain effort to bring about harmony between the ideal and the real. With the modern habit of greater definiteness and more careful investigation, resulting from the growth of science, this is becoming every day more clear.

The last of the precepts which I have above classified are those which enjoin the duty of universal love. They, perhaps better than any other, serve to illustrate the antagonism between the ideal and the real. In the next chapter I will examine them in detail; for the present I will say merely that they involve a failure to discriminate between the different kinds of normal emotions in man, where nature persists in making discrimination.

I now come to consider how the impersonal phase of the movement from theology to secularism affects ethics. I have several times dealt with this impersonal phase to show how forces which are greater than verbal argument move the minds of the great mass of men. In the field of secular influences, as we have seen, the fruits of modern science bring about an indifference to faith in supersensual things among the masses; this indifference is accompanied by a lessening sense of reverence for the sacred character of precepts of conduct, and a correlatively growing disposition to study the actual instead of the ideal. There is thus developed gradually among mankind a disposition to regard rules of conduct no longer as stationary, but as changing with the progress and enlargement of human experience, and there

is produced a body of laws which are essentially different from those produced by the ages of faith, and these latter supplant the older laws because of their applicability to actual conduct. Thus is justified the importance ascribed to unperceived impersonal influence as a factor in the movement. Man is led by this influence in spite of his prejudices. It is a movement of the mind from indefiniteness to definiteness in physical illustration. Nature's law in action impressed upon men's minds, by repeated impressions, teaches them that, if there be a god, he cannot be such a god as theology claims, since he by his own conduct through natural law lessens man's sense of reverence for the revelation of theology. The student of ethics thus gradually trenches upon the domain of assumed sacred duty, and finds there existing the contest between all ecclesiasticism and secularism for the possession of the field. The theory of ethics derived from natural behavior is contrasted with the theory set forth in sacred precepts. The secular theory, being more practicable and therefore more comprehensive, is gradually displacing the other, until none but the theologian, overcome by sacred prepossessions, can deny that the world is the better for having the test of intelligent investigation applied to conduct. Employing the secular method of study we find that the indiscriminate giver of alms is not apt to be the best helper of the weak nor the true promoter of the virtues and sanctions of society; that assistance of all kinds involves the duty of him who renders it to look into the consequences of his assistance. We

find that all efforts to practise non-resistance tend only to encourage oppression ; that such efforts cannot in any sense be indications of healthful growth. There is nothing occult in all this, and when the mind is directed from sacred contemplation towards the secular study of conditions as they are about us, it becomes indifferent to the old sense of sacredness by which the theologian regards his moral precepts and correlatively interested in the study of natural law as a means of learning correct conduct.

In its earlier stage the impersonal influence upon the mind is unperceived, especially where the mind is imbued with theological prepossessions. It is only by taking a retrospect, finding a decline in one's emotional prepossessions, and studying the causes which have produced it, that we come to perceive the instances in which the influence has been at work. Tracing the influence to its source, we find it to consist in secular knowledge. From multiplied instances of its effects we reasonably infer a general law. As the influence further progresses, it causes us to observe the operation of the emotions in others, and gradually to measure our own emotions by the measurement which we make of the emotions of those around us. Further on we are impelled to measure emotions as they operate in larger classes of man, then as they manifest themselves in history and are illustrated by different ages and in different races. Here, then, is an influence which moves the student broadly to estimate the value of his own emotions and of his personality as factors, in a way that he could not by any

effort at introspection. Gradually he perceives the influence of ideals as they behave in a general way. He thus discovers his own ideals to be illusive in contrast with the reasons derived from experience, and so at last concludes that the ideal-forming faculty is not the faculty for furnishing supreme truth, but that its behavior deters the mind from the appreciation of such truth as the mind uninfluenced by it is capable of perceiving. The same process which has moved him in the initial stages has moved the theologian also, and it is the degree of this movement which distinguishes the narrow from the liberal theologian. Thus, by the secular student the fruits of knowledge are appreciated as influences which operate upon prepossessions and make ideals less and less supreme, supplanting them in the mind with inferences from fact. The whole difference between the theologian who is unconsciously progressing towards secularism under this influence, and the student who has reached a thoroughly secular point, is that the former can realize the instances of change as specific instances, whilst the secular student is enabled to recognize such instances as the result of universal law.

When one has reached the complete secular stage, he has no difficulty in perceiving the influence of acquired knowledge; and, by contrasting his own place in the movement with the place of those who have not acquired this knowledge, he discerns their illusions. Nor can he fail to realize the value of a knowledge of natural law as a means of disposing, one by one, of the specific assumptions of

theology. He must derive from these specific instances a principle of universal application, to the effect that no conclusions reached through sacred reservation or sacred estimate can be so near truth as are those which come from secular investigation. He who, by the influence of his surroundings, has become thoroughly secular, stands at a distance, as it were, from the whole subject of his study, and is thus able to discriminate as otherwise he could not. He sees how passions like his own behave in other individuals, in groups of individuals, and in nations. He sees how the action of undiscriminated emotion prevents calm examination. Applying his rule to the ideal precepts of conduct held by the theologic student in sacred reverence, he finds them at variance with standards derived from real conduct. He therefore infers that not only the effort to put these ideals into practice, but what theology calls the duty of believing in them, deters rather than promotes right conduct. He concludes that it cannot be well to have precepts so ideal that none, however they may try, can realize them in practice. And thus it becomes manifest to him that the teachings of Jesus concerning conduct are in their essence antagonistic to the results of secular knowledge. The teachings of secular knowledge discourage impulsive almsgiving, for the reason that in indiscriminate giving the consequences are not considered; they encourage assistance to the weak, but from disregard of the very motive theology holds most in reverence; they discourage improvidence as foolish, and encourage solicitude as wise; they discover in the progress of

civilization an immanent necessity for thrift among individuals and in nations; they discourage non-resistance and commend resistance to oppression, because upon such resistance depends the support of individual rights and duties upon which all virtue rests. In a word, all the teachings of secular knowledge discriminate in favor of the natural and against the supernatural.

It must be seen that it is not skill in verbal argument which produces these conclusions, for the great multitude of minds thus moved are not distinguished for mental agility. They are of the ordinary class. What moves them are the new premises and the new data—the object lessons which lie about on every hand and in plain view, and which consist of the fruits of knowledge.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ETHICS (*Continued*).

NOTHING can afford us better means of appreciating the antagonism between sacred and secular ethics than the study of the different estimates which science and theology respectively put upon the emotion of love. The theologic precepts relating to this emotion, as set forth by Jesus, are: That we should love our neighbor as ourselves; that all things whatsoever we would that men should do to us we should do even so to them; that we should love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that persecute us. Every word of these precepts, with the exception of the word "neighbor" employed in the first of them, is as definite as it can possibly be made; and all the words, taken together with the spirit and the context, render unmistakable their intent. Even "neighbor" is made definite by the context, since one of the hearers, asking its meaning, is answered by the parable of the man who went down into Jericho and fell among thieves. Thereby the word "neighbor" became a synonym for all mankind, and thus the precept enjoins the duty of universal and unqualified love for all with whom one comes in



contact. The difficulty with these precepts, then, is not that they are in the least uncertain as to meaning, or as to the intent of him who uttered them, but it is that they are not susceptible of actual application.

In order to love one's neighbor as one's self, the one loving must disregard all differences between himself and his neighbor, and, inasmuch as the term neighbor embraces everybody, it is necessary that he whose love is without discrimination must underrate the essential differences existing between all men. Inequalities but express individuality; they represent a law of nature which underlies all the facts of human life. We may have theories in which we may ignore this law, but we cannot thus obliterate it.

Now let us ask how it is that sacred precepts are inapplicable to real life, inevitably interfering with the laws of conduct. In other words, how do they prevent correct inferences concerning conduct? By employing as illustration the behavior of individuals in different relations, I think we shall find that sacred ideals always lead toward neglect of individual differences, and thus interfere with appropriate behavior. The effort to put into practice precepts of universal love meets with its first obstruction in the very constitution of the family. The love subsisting between husband and wife is the expression of an emotion which is *sui generis*. The love which subsists between parents and children is also unique. Again, the love of parents for their children is different from that which children bear their parents. Differences of age and circumstances necessarily imply corresponding dif-

ferences in the domestic emotions. The love parents entertain for their children suggests duties of nurture, of protection, of support, and of education—duties of a specific nature, which, so far as the children are concerned, cannot be said to be reciprocal. The normal love children entertain for their parents as plainly suggests duties of respect and of obedience—duties which the parents cannot reciprocate. The love entertained by children for one another is essentially different from that which they entertain for their parents, or from that which their parents entertain for them. The husband who best loves his wife, the father who best loves his children, illustrates the propriety of his love by a certain discrimination in which he resolutely refuses to carry such love into the world. A true husband and father cannot ignore these diversities of nature—he cannot confuse the kind of emotion proper to the household with those phases of it which are expressed by friendship, justice, benevolence, or with those indicated in the duties of citizenship. The woman most faithful to her husband illustrates the kind and degree of her affection by its very exclusiveness. If she undertakes to extend her love beyond its natural province; she mars its quality, and, in so doing, injures herself, her husband, her family, and society. However much such a woman may have been commended to forgiveness because she loved much, society has never joined and never can join in the commendation. Whilst nothing may seem to the reverent mind more beautiful than this scriptural example of ready forgiveness, nothing is in fact more inadmissible in actual

life. It is upon the determined refusal by society to approve efforts at realizing such instances that family virtue depends. Moreover, no social organization can permit a parent to extend to a neighbor even the milder exercise of solicitude appropriate within one's own family. All such attempts must be recognized as interference with the rights of two households. However honest or beneficent may be the motive which prompts the interference, its consequences are inevitably vicious. The best examples of husbands and wives, of fathers and mothers, and of children, are afforded by those who distinguish most carefully the household from the world. These are the best because they illustrate the fact that every effort to exploit family emotions beyond the home circle renders those who make it less capable of exercising them within that circle. All this is true in instances; it is also true generally, and is therefore a universal law; and it may be said of all men and of all women everywhere that they never can express normal emotion by emulating ideals in which varying phases of the emotions are ignored. The world is never afforded instances of confusion of the qualities of love, friendship, and justice by men or women who carefully distinguish their domestic duties from their obligations beyond the pale of the household; the world is furnished, however, with innumerable instances of such confusion by persons who seek to realize sacred ideals of conduct—who try to make such ideals overrule the teachings of experience.

The affections of the household constitute the

foundation of civilization. The preservation of these affections is the prime essential of social life. Family emotions are intimately associated with the beginning, the continuance, and the end of all mortal being. They underlie all normal behavior. Their preservation constitutes the safeguard of the highest social union known to man, the tenderest relation that can possibly exist. One of these phases expresses, as we have seen, the exclusiveness of conjugal love; another emphasizes the protection and nurture of progeny; another, fraternal and filial affection. Throughout all of them, distinguished and discriminated, family union is secured, and upon the integrity of this union depends the highest welfare of communities, nations, and the whole world. We must not, then, underrate the importance of defining the emotions, and of determining their proper function and character. It is only by this course that we can secure their normal activity and prevent the intrusion of that bias by which justice is set at naught, and by which honesty is defeated.

When we proceed from the household to the community or nation, the phases of emotion not appropriate to the family become multiplied and complex; so much so that those phases, expressed in the home life, are but few in proportion to those which are manifested by man in his intercourse with society. The second ethical rule from the Sermon on the Mount, called the "golden rule," is meant by its author to regulate all man's relations with man. It enjoins us to do unto others as we would have others do unto us, a precept intended to be of universal

application. Efforts without number have been made to paraphrase and to explain this rule. One such is thus given by Kant: "Act only that maxim whereby thou canst, at the same time will, that it should become universal law."<sup>1</sup> I employ this instance because Kant's statement, in what Herbert Spencer calls allotropic form, helps us to point out the difficulty of the rule, and at the same time show how the modern metaphysical thinker has failed to realize the necessity for determined application as the true means of testing the value of an ethical proposition. Whilst the original rule is not allotropic in form, it is so by implication, for it ignores essential differences between men—those differences which Nature always makes in conferring capacity or incapacity, power or weakness. As I have heretofore shown, Nature furnishes variety by the very process of furnishing individuality. Variety of itself implies characteristic differences in the behavior of individuals. It is by studying the behavior of these characteristic differences as they manifest themselves in life that the necessity underlying the varieties of normal behavior appears. The largest measure of individuality demands the least external interference. The exaltation of ideal precepts interferes with the functions of the individual, and tends to prevent the best contributions of man to the welfare of society. If we take, for example, any two men, one of whom has a higher, the other a lower aptitude for attainment, and if we assume it the duty of the former to

<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant's *Theory of Ethics*, translated by J. K. Abbott, London, 1873, p. 54.

repress his nobler qualities in order that the other may equal him, then must we approve a course which interrupts social progress, for inequality is an essential of this progress. When we impose upon others an ideal rule, we institute an influence which confuses the emotions of justice and love, and when such confusion results from what is held to be a sacred duty, the evil becomes all the more serious. Differences of faculty manifested by Nature are just as essential to civilization as light and heat to life; and the freedom with which they operate is a measure of the progress of which man is capable. It is because these differences imply corresponding differences in the behavior due from one to another that it is impossible to realize an ideal precept requiring any one man in his dealing with another to put himself entirely in the position of the other. The identity sought involves an annihilation of constitutional temperament and capacity. A precept held as sacred, and which, in the effort to practise it, requires us to ignore the necessities of Nature, not only fails to accomplish its aim, but perverts conduct, and the reverence in which such precepts are held only increases their power for evil. The spirit of universal love, requiring man to disregard his individuality, is expressed in the scriptural injunction to act upon the assumption that all occupy in life the same place. The precept which requires of us love for our enemies and prayer for our persecutors illustrates the solecism of holding a certain kind of love as something different from every practical application of the sentiment.

The love for enemies, were it possible, could proceed only from an abnormal nature ; for he who seeks to ignore natural law, who can proceed upon the theory of disregarding and ignoring all individuality, cannot be otherwise than abnormal. It cannot be normal to love a real enemy or a real persecutor as one does one's self, since there cannot be anything in enmity to excite affection. When, out of reverence for a sacred ideal, one seeks to love the unlovable, he defies Nature ; and, if it were possible to obey the precept, in obeying it he would produce injustice. If my enemy's enmity or his persecution of me arises from a course on my part which I believe to be thoroughly virtuous, obviously my very fidelity to my right course will be impaired by any effort on my part to love him who opposes it. If, on the other hand, his enmity is due to some improper conduct of mine, my obvious course is to reform my conduct. Earnest prayer for one who persecutes implies a total ignorance of the cause and character of persecution ; and an ideal precept which enjoins of one to love his enemies is so personal that he who seeks to engage in it misconceives the whole office of love, and disregards the qualities of hate and persecution. In ignoring righteous indignation and endeavoring to replace it with unrighteous love, the whole tendency of the effort is to defeat principles of justice.

It may be said that the characteristics of individuality here noted are commonplace. So, indeed, they are, but the legitimate inferences to be derived from them touching conduct are far-reaching and by

no means commonplace—inferences disregarded by all who cling to sacred precepts as in themselves perfect; just as these inferences become generally realized as correct inferences from actual experience, reverence for the ideal rules of conduct must cease to be regarded as the best means for learning the true laws of conduct or for promoting the virtue of mankind. Nothing can be more essential, therefore, to the proper study of conduct than attention to the fact that actual differences existing between individuals must be taken into account in order to enable the student of ethics to discriminate between the different phases of emotion, since it is only by this means that he can properly designate the appropriate sphere of love, friendship, benevolence, magnanimity, and justice. It is only in this way that any of us become able to perceive that indiscriminate emotion, however well-meant, cannot produce wholesome conduct. It is by this means, too, that we become capable of appreciating the fact that emotion so transcendent in the theologic mind causes its possessor to resist all calm investigation into ethical causes, conditions, and consequences; that the very sincerity of the reverent mind blinds the possessor to the perception of the consequences of indiscriminate emotion. When the secular idea of justice thoroughly possesses a man, he attains the power to realize the impossibility of such an ideal as universal love, and the power to appreciate how abortive are the consequences of endeavoring to put into practice such an ideal. The secular idea of justice finds in the very fact of the differences which



exist between different individuals, that love can only be consistent with justice by a careful discrimination of it from justice, and, more broadly speaking, this secular idea exhibits justice, love, friendship, benevolence, and magnanimity, as phases of emotion, each reaching its highest possible development through rigid discrimination.

If a passionless analysis of the different phases of emotion, as a means for measuring the ethical value of the precepts of Jesus, seems narrow to the theologian, it is only because his sacred sense exaggerates his ideal text. Such analysis cannot otherwise seem narrow. It cannot be held in any sense to be too literal or verbal; for in its wholeness it leads the student to look through the words to the spirit of the precepts. The underlying motive of the injunction to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us, implies that we should make our action conform to the desire of others. The underlying motive of the injunction to love our enemies, to bless them that hate us, makes it necessary for us to be devoted to those who hate us, to entertain a real longing for blessings upon those who are bent upon our destruction, and to pray fervently for the prosperity and welfare of those who seek to make our lives burdensome. These injunctions admit of no possible interpretation which justifies us in measuring our gifts or our conduct by our sense of right, or, indeed, by any other means than by exerting a vain effort to entertain indiscriminating love.

If, therefore, we are to test the value of these pre-

cepts by actual practice, if we are to recognize the behavior of natural law, if in so doing we are to resort to no subterfuge whatever, nor halt between two opinions, we must admit the fact that the precepts of Jesus are in their very essence not for this world ; that efforts to apply them cannot answer the demands of justice ; that they cannot therefore meet the highest requirements of the human race. For these reasons I repeat here that the only theory upon which the utterance of such ideals can be explained is that he who uttered them believed himself to be providing for a messianic kingdom, and that they were delivered to hearers who entertained no shadow of doubt of the speedy coming of this kingdom ; that thus these ideals were conceived as applicable to supernatural conditions. To conclude otherwise we should have to believe either that Jesus was setting forth teachings which he knew, when reduced to practice in existing conditions of life, would produce injustice in place of justice and would thus lower rather than elevate the standard of life, or else that he was ignorant of the power and persistency of natural law.

Let us now look at the natural behavior of the emotions by examining them as manifested by two classes of professing Christians. It is undeniable that there are a multitude of Christians who live unblemished lives, and who point to the precepts of Jesus, which are held by them in worshipful reverence, as the reason for their conduct. The only manner in which we can determine whether their lives are the result of the injunctions of Jesus, is by

seeking to test their behavior by those injunctions. Whilst these Christians recognize their secular duties, we look in vain among them for instances of a realization of non-resistance to evil, of self-abnegating love for those who hate them, or of a real disposition to bless those who seek to injure them. We find that, when engaged in business, they deal honestly, justly, and even generously, yet direct their energies with skill and prudence. They have achieved their characters and reputations by following certain lines of actual and ascertainable conduct. What are these lines? Seeing how they extol the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and hold them in reverent worship, we might look to this reverence as the ground for their success. But when we seek to verify the theories, we find that Christian theorists are not true to the sacred injunction to take no heed of the morrow, or to practise improvidence as a duty, or to treat the wishes of the mendicant as the motive for giving, or to hold the disposition of the borrower as the criterion for lending. They are not among those who pay cheerful heed to imprecations against riches, or to laudations of poverty. However highly they regard such precepts, however much they profess to be influenced by them, in practice they systematically avoid them, and it is because they so avoid them that their characters have been well formed and their successes achieved. The rules which they hold in reverence cannot be said to constitute either the model of their characters or the law of their lives.

In view of all this, what is the value of the theologian's answer? He tells us that we must regard the rules as coming from a sacred source, and therefore not to be questioned; that sacred injunctions of behavior must be held as importing a spiritual meaning entirely apart from their expression or from any effort to apply them; that reverent contemplation of them exerts mysteriously upon the mind an influence producing a spiritual character, expressing itself, not in an effort to obey the injunctions, but in the disposition to reverence them. It is against this spiritual vagueness that modern knowledge is pressing. As the definiteness of knowledge increases, the impossibility of applying the sacred ideals to practice grows more manifest, thus exhibiting by slow degrees their weakness. Whoever reflects must realize that rules of conduct cannot be considered irrelevant to actual conduct; that such rules must be put into practice; that their value must at last be measured by the degree in which they fit fact and circumstance. This means that the value of ideals cannot be ascertained by a rule that forbids their application. As knowledge moves men's minds from empyreal contemplation to actual test, ideals lose all value as laws of behavior. Even were it conceded that contemplation of some sort of ideals produces beneficial results upon the mind of the subject, it can never be conceded that inconsistencies, however beguiling as theories, can make a true foundation for a law of behavior. No sacred precept can promote virtue unless it can stand the test of application; no precept which does not fall into

accord with justice, as justice is derived from the study of human experience, can ever properly be called the law of conduct. However sacred it may be held, it cannot change laws of Nature inferred from normal behavior; and however impressive the theologic reverence regarding it may have been, knowledge inevitably moves men's minds away from this vagueness regarding it towards definiteness.

There is another class of professing Christians whose example affords an illustration of the more direct evil resulting from the vagueness of ethical ideals. It is made up of those who employ the scriptural injunctions to justify tortuous conduct. The very vagueness by which the ideal rules are held, as related to practice, the very sense of their inapplicability, affords a pretext to the members of this class for that easy course of letting adulation of their deity, or strict observance of their ritual, or free alms, or liberal donations to churches, make amends for behavior which falls out of all congruity with the principles of correct living as these principles are taught by experience. The formula of the theory of the members of this class may be thus stated: "Since sacred precepts are perfect and man imperfect, he cannot practise them." This theory is held to justify human failure, and to condone the dereliction of those who, adopting it, rely upon their piety and reverence for justification. They deal with their deity as one who, having a like emotional nature unto themselves, is inclined to condone failures arising from the emotions. They regard him as a being who, by ignoring natural law, is ready to

justify their caprices and encourage contradictory conduct because it is emotional. By acting upon this theory their sense of justice becomes blurred. Impressed as they are with the idea of neglecting that kind of conduct which is founded upon a study of well-defined ethical principles, and believing that the practice of conduct arising from emotion, if wrong, may be condoned by adoration, the study of the principles of applied conduct can have no importance to them. They find it easier, as Schopenhauer has said, to beg their way into heaven than to deserve final reward by virtuous action. Whilst with fatuitous irrelevancy their sense of reverence leads them to condemn as blasphemous the least questioning of their revered ideals, they themselves never for an instant think of attempting to put these ideals in practice.

Of the two classes I have mentioned, the first may be said to build good characters and perform duties by systematically avoiding the practice of the precepts which they worship, and the second to create for themselves false characters and practise dishonest acts by setting up in justification of bad conduct the impossibility of practising their ideals. Both are instances of aberration, the difference being that, in the first class, good conduct is produced in spite of the ideal precepts, while in the second, bad conduct is produced by reason of them.

Besides the two classes thus set forth, there is a still larger class composed of men both within and without the Church, who come under the influence of the reverence for ideal rules and who cultivate

the habit of mind by which contemplation of ideals diverts them from the study and practice of what is real. This class is met in every department of life. We find within it men whose minds have become so distorted by reverent feeling for their ideals that they freely indulge in theories of the wildest sort, holding these theories above all examination or question. We find within it men who assume it right to ignore all the obligations of contract; who seek power through legislation to enable them to distribute the fruits of industry and of skill by defying all the economic laws of incentive and distribution; who believe it right that those who do not and cannot earn shall share equally the fruits of the labor of those who can and do. Among this class there are those who are so incapable of correct judgment by reason of their visions, that they denounce all the accumulation of wealth as wrong to society; there are others who are so overcome with their sentiment of pity for poverty that they are blind to the causes of poverty and advocate means which are calculated only to intensify and increase it. Directly or indirectly this whole class is the product of theologic modes of thought in which indiscriminated emotion dominates the judgment. In no case is it the result of a careful and dispassionate study of cause and effect—in other words, of the knowledge born of science.

The secular student, standing apart from all these classes, and thus enabled to study them objectively, perceives how reverence for sacred ideals interferes with an appreciation of the causes and effects of

conduct ; he sees how, whenever conduct produces a wholesome result, it proves on examination to be of the kind which falls into accord with secular law and out of accord with sacred ideals. He observes that the virtues of benevolence and justice are best exemplified by those who are prudent, who resist evil, and who exhibit forethought. He observes further that self-defence and self-protection, however discouraged by the ideal precepts, are in practice the high virtues upon which the safety of the individual, of the family, and of society depends. He observes indeed that among the great mass of men there are here and there some who really and persistently seek to draw their lessons from these precepts and to put these lessons into practice ; men who seek to follow literally the example of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air ; men who neither toil nor spin, who make no provision either for themselves or others, who are really non-resistant, who try to despise wealth and admire poverty. He observes, however, that these are not the promoters of civilization, and that they exhibit none of the qualities of civilization. He finds them rather in almshouses, on the highways, and in the insane asylums.

Let us now turn from an examination of the precepts pronounced by Jesus to a consideration of the principles of justice, in order to learn whether Christianity, comprehensively considered, has promoted or retarded justice. The broad claim made by all who call themselves Christians is, that justice is essentially a Christian virtue. The theologic inference from this is not only that this virtue is charac-



teristic of Christianity, but that it has been in some way originated and developed by Christian precepts. Indeed, this comprehensive claim is not confined to the theologian. It is sometimes made by philosophers in marshalling what they call the Christian virtues, or in speaking of the general influences of Christianity. When we try to define this claim, to consider how and why it is so uniformly made by so many different sects of Christianity, we perceive that, accompanying the positiveness and largeness of the claim, there is always a degree of vagueness regarding its precise subject-matter. To bring this subject-matter within correct definition is a prerequisite to an adequate examination of the value of the claim. In other words, it is necessary, in order to determine the relation of Christianity to justice, that we should know what Christianity actually embraces, and also that we should reach some agreement as to what the qualities of justice are.

We are compelled to recognize the fact that the Christianity of history consists of a concatenated ecclesiastical influence extending backward to the beginning of the first century of what is called the Christian era. In studying the influence of this Christianity we cannot rationally treat it as a disjointed or fragmentary thing. It must be taken as embracing all varieties of Christian faith and conduct. It must be taken as a Comprehensive Power which began by being persuasive nearly nineteen hundred years ago; which soon after its beginning assumed authority, and which has continued by varied manifestations to impress the western world

to the present day. Christianity, in this sense, may be said to comprehend all ecclesiastical organizations which accept the body of dogma resting upon the assumed revelation in the Old and New Testaments, upon tradition concerning these, and upon the precepts of faith and conduct which are assumed to be divinely given. Inasmuch as these organizations differ widely in their interpretations of different parts of dogma and precepts, Christianity, in embracing them all, necessarily exerts a varied influence upon mankind. Before the Reformation, this Christianity consisted of the Roman and Greek organizations, and after the Reformation these with all the subsequent Protestant organizations added. When it is claimed, then, by the theologian that Christianity has been the supporter of all the virtues of life, we must test the claim, not by accepting the theoretic or ideal Christianity of an individual theologian, but by studying historical Christianity—the actual Christianity of nearly nineteen hundred years.

The one thing common to all theologians making this claim is, that they make the incidentally sweeping claim that all supersensual truth is derived from revelation and interpreted by a spiritual sense. The vagueness of this large claim is disclosed in the efforts to apply it, just as is the vagueness of the similar claim that Christianity is the promoter of all civilization. Every effort to test either of these by such application is opposed by every individual theologian. He resents every test of what he calls spiritual power and spiritual verity, save the test of his own feelings, and he similarly

resents every definition of Christianity save the definition derived from his ideals. If the theologic claimant is a Protestant, and his attention is directed to the Church of Rome as a power which has instituted the doctrines of Mariolatry and Hagiolatry, or as a power which, in the province of secular thought, has denounced the heliocentric theory of the universe as heresy, or as a power which has treated as impious the facts disclosed by the telescope of Galileo, he will not hesitate to charge that the Roman Church dealt injustice to freedom, obstructed the progress of knowledge, and stood in the way of civilization. But this same Protestant claimant, in so doing, ignores the fact that the Roman Church which did all this, was, as an organization, the sole custodian of Christianity in the West for nearly fifteen centuries; that, as such, it was the embodiment of the Christianity (which this claimant sets forth as the most beneficent factor of civilization), and that this very Roman organization was a more powerful and efficient representative of Western Christianity than ever was or can be the particular sect of this Protestant claimant. Such claimant, then, fails to realize how irrelevant are his conclusions in thus ignoring the real historical Christianity. The fact is, he holds as a creator and supporter of civilization an ideal radically different from the realities developed in history. That influence conceived by him to be the beneficent origin of everything worth having is expressed by a small sect, a repudiator of all the large historical organizations that principally comprehend Christianity. Even if the particular phase

of Christianity which this claimant supports did contain all the virtue which he conceives, the irrefutable fact still remains, that his own sect is but a minor part of a great historical force, and as such it is but an expression of internecine conflict within the body of Christianity. Because he believes in the omnipotence of the less, and because he is blinded by this belief, he disregards the power of the greater. He is impelled to this view by the personal sense which characterizes all ideal faith. If he could but for a moment divest himself of this, and with a secular grasp examine the underlying facts, he would be impelled to a realization of the narrowness of his view. It is in the larger historical sense that we are obliged to regard Christianity in seeking to determine the part it has taken in the reign of justice and of civilization.

In order to complete the data by which we may correctly examine the relation, let us note the difference between the ideas of justice held by the secular and the theologic mind. The idea of justice which the theologian assumes to derive from precepts, is in its very essence different from that which is derived from the study of human conduct and experience—as different as an ideal thing is from a real thing. Theology sets forth justice as something finished; science sets it forth as progressive. The theologian assumes that the theologic idea must be perfect because derived from heaven; the secular student reasons that his idea cannot be perfect, because it simply imports the best expression of the behavior of man towards man. The best

examples of human justice can never be either better or worse than those furnished by the best prevailing condition. The secular student insists that justice can no more be thought of as the result of fiat than can the physical origin of the earth ; that it can no more arise from faith in dogma held to be sacred than can knowledge itself. The fundamental difference between theologic and secular theories of justice is that by the theologian it is treated as an immutable precept of divine authority, while by the secular disciple its principles are held to be declared by the voice of experience. Theologic justice being ideal is beyond realization ; secular justice is inferred from the best current examples of realization. The differences thus characterizing the theologic and the secular theories of justice are like those differences which distinguish sacred faith from secular inquiry. So far as justice is held by the theologian to be divine, transcending all human experience, so far it can have no progress. Upon the other hand, by secular theory, justice, because deducible from actual experience, is progressive. Which of these theories, the theologic or the secular, can support the test of application ?

It will not be necessary, in making our examination, to consider at length the ultimate springs of human action, or to make nice shades of distinction. All we need is to present acts by general consent held to be just or unjust ; to disassociate such acts from their motives and to re-associate the act and motive in order to distinguish the qualities. For instance, when we consider the torture imposed by the In-

quisitor, we need only for a moment forget that the Inquisitor was of a particular faith, and ask whether torture for opinion's sake can be just. If we determine this, as we must, in the negative, we may then judge the sect which imposed the torture, by the common standard of justice.

With a view, then, to discovering how Christianity has dealt with justice, and generally how it has affected civilization, let us briefly look at its historical characteristics.

Between the Christianity of Rome and that of Constantinople, there were exhibited from the beginning wide differences in the interpretation of dogma. The Christianity of Western civilization fully serves the purpose of illustration, since the main characteristics of the Eastern church and of the Roman, so far as these relate to justice, are the same. The early Christians at Rome looked intently for that revolution of the world which was to accompany the return of the Messiah—a revolution which was to carry terror to unbelievers, and to institute for the faithful the order of things set forth in all the teachings and precepts of Jesus. Disappointment began gradually to manifest itself as these Christians came to realize the failure of their expectations, so they reconciled themselves as best they could to a world from which they had hitherto stood sternly aloof in an attitude of extreme hostility. The community of converts which under the necessity of belief that all earthly things were speedily to perish, had maintained a provisional and expectant existence, began to establish itself on a permanent basis, becoming

at length an ecclesiastical organization—the depository of Christianity. As the faith of the early Christians spread, the organization manifested a disposition to exercise not only that which is termed a spiritual power over the world, but a veritable physical dominion, as the means of securing permanency. Thenceforth it asserted all the secular authority it could command. As the custodian of sacred faith, it declared that it had derived from heaven an authority concerning truth, empowering it to unite all true believers in one mind. It distinguished itself by holding all opposition as heretical, and as an organization it constituted itself the one Universal Church. It proceeded to exact from its assumed divine revelation the warrant for the regulation of every department of government, as necessary for the maintenance of a specific creed. It thereupon set itself to determine in what records Revelation should consist, what the Old and what the New Testament should comprise, and what specific traditions should prevail. For the more effective preservation of its unity, and in order to ward off heresy, it organized a priesthood with graduated authority. It erected schools where sacred doctrines were to be taught and dogmas interpreted, and, as it became more completely organized, it established cathedrals and monasteries where its doctrines and dogmas were preached and practised, and sacred precepts of conduct were enjoined.

Broadly speaking, the Christianity of the West has had two distinct phases, one exhibited by the Church as an ecclesiastical power in association with the

state dealing with the world and with heresy ; or the Church comprising a number of ecclesiastical powers in dealing with each other, and with the world and heresy ; the other exhibited by the Church, dealing with its servants and devotees and in teaching them precepts of conduct and articles of faith. Christianity thus stands for two antithetical orders of conduct, one order characterized by its practices, the other by its precepts. It is necessary to hold this fact in mind, because it would otherwise be impossible adequately to estimate the influence exercised by Christianity upon civilization and upon morals.

What especially characterized early Christianity distinguished from all Pagan Mythology, was the intensity of emotion which was imported into the former—an emotion manifested by the individual Christians in every act of their daily lives. It is impossible to conceive a stronger contrast than is shown between the calmness of the Pagan philosophy, which at this time completely dominated the Pagan theology, and that personal enthusiasm possessed by all who held the new faith. Such intensity never existed in any stage of Pagan theology. The very multiplicity of the Pagan gods, their various characters, the human qualities attributed to them, all imparted freedom to Pagan thought which was not of itself promotive of intensity. At the beginning of the Christian era Pagan theology was particularly apathetic. As a theology it was plainly in its decline. Progressive thought, both in Athens and in Rome, had reduced the sense of sacredness with which it had been regarded. Thus, before Chris-



tianity began its work, a division of Paganism had manifested itself. As a theology it had ceased to be the groundwork of moral conduct. In this respect its power over men's minds was destroyed. The division between morals and belief in myth or legend was already carried so far that the inculcation of morals had become the exclusive work of the philosophers, whilst the priests contented themselves with soothsayings and expiations. In a word, faith in the gods had ceased to be associated with human conduct. The reverence held for these gods was simply a moderate superstition. Under such circumstances it was that Christianity had its beginning and its opportunity. It erected a theology into which there was infused a degree of emotion never before dreamed of. It asserted a mysterious monotheism engrafted upon Semitic thought, clothed a triune god with attributes of supreme emotion, teaching imminent rewards and imminent punishment. Besides all this, it impressed upon the mind the utter littleness of mortal life and the overpowering magnitude of the life to come, and promised to all who accepted its terms the perpetual enjoyment of bliss at the speedy coming of the Messiah. In this way it called into action for the first time the highest degree of emotion of which a human being is capable, and it may be said that, in so doing, it called into being a power which oppressed human judgment. We must realize that, little as such emotional intensity can be held to assure the verity of the objects of supersensual faith or to furnish a true means of estimating moral conduct, it certainly presents a

sufficient explanation for the rapid substitution of Christianity for Paganism. In the formative processes of Christianity the readiness of the individual Christian for self-sacrifice was first characteristically exhibited under the reign of Nero, and then under the more just reign of Marcus Aurelius. How small a warrant for truth there was in the emotional convictions held by the early martyrs is daily coming more and more to be appreciated as knowledge progresses. With an assurance of immortality, they died, in the belief that as immortals they should return to the world where they, and those of their faith, should be clothed with a power which would enable them to annihilate the wicked and possess the earth. The craving for supernatural happiness characterized the early martyrs far more than any efforts to realize precepts of conduct in their daily lives. It was their certainty with reference to immortality that made Justin the Martyr and Polycarp so ready to die. It was martyrdoms such as these which furnished the assurance to the new Church that martyrdom was an incontestable proof of the verity of dogma. To the secular student of to-day such exhibitions only illustrate, as they did to Marcus Aurelius, the fact that personal sacrifice, even readiness to die for faith in dogma, is not enough to establish the truth of that dogma.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "What a soul that is which is ready, if at any moment it must be separated from the body, and ready either to be extinguished or dispersed or to continue to exist ; but so that this readiness comes from a man's own judgment, not from mere obstinacy, as with the Christians, but considerately and with dignity and in a way to persuade another, without tragic show."—*The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*, book xi., chap. iii.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ETHICS (*Concluded*).

**C**ONTINUING the consideration of the attitude of ecclesiastical power towards human conduct, we may see that however much the sacred precepts regarding conduct were enjoined by the authorities of the Church, however much these precepts were held in reverence by devout servants, it was not through any effort to practise them that the organization itself became established in the world. There were, indeed, among the early Christians many individual instances of non-resistance, but these were of non-resistance to oppression which the oppressed could not hope successfully to withstand. Apology after apology for Christian faith went up from the individual Christians to reigning emperors. Meanwhile, with the Church organization itself, no opportunity to obtain greater strength was left unused. Ecclesiasticism set up all the machinery of the supernatural. It invoked the miraculous in instances without number. It sought to impress the minds of the superstitious by promising rich rewards for acquiescence to its behests, and by threatening eternal torture for disobedience to these behests; and just in proportion as church organization devel-

oped, aggression developed and was resorted to as the means for perpetuating the hierarchical power. When, by the conversion of Constantine, the civil power was placed at the disposal of the Church, the era of apology was closed. The authority of ecclesiasticism was by this conversion fully established; thenceforth, so far as the behavior of the powers in charge of the organization was concerned, ideal precepts and actual practices stood in the greatest possible contrast. The alliance between the Church and the State imported the domination of the Church—the assertion by the Church of a supreme spiritual power not only over the professions of faith, but over all the secular acts of men. Thenceforth, too, it was assumed by ecclesiasticism that the well-being of Christianity itself necessarily required persecution for the support and maintenance of true faith. Thus, from the moment the Church under Constantine attained civil power, coercion was held to be a prerogative and a principle, and became employed with systematic severity against the Jews, the heretics, and the pagans. Although the ecclesiastical organization thereafter continued to preach ideal precepts to its devotees, it, as an organization, did not even pretend to seek to practise these ideals; and when we search for the conditions of its growth, we are forced to admit that it was by avoiding the effort to practise them that it was enabled to continue and to enlarge its power. Whenever, therefore, we seek for instances in which real effort is made to practise the precepts enjoined by the Church, we must look to the monastery and

the cloister, or here and there to the household of the individual devotees—never to Ecclesiastical Power. Whilst, indeed, the custodians of this Power point to such instances of effort with pride, as if to prove by them the benign influence of all that Christianity implies, we must remember that, even were we to close our eyes to the actual behavior of Ecclesiastical Power, and to admit asceticism and self-abnegation as wholesome, we cannot deny the historical fact that they are but secondary expressions of Christianity, and, besides, that they prove antagonistic to its larger expressions. Where the Church enjoined unrestrained love for enemies, it was ideal love for imaginary enemies, or at least for enemies never encountered. Where it inculcated non-resistance, it was non-resistance to be practised by devotees concerning unrealized aggression. The monk in the cloister reverently accepted what was taught him, because his sense of reverence forbade him questioning the quality of the teaching. The nun joyously sought to live by ideal precepts, and fancied she did it, because she never encountered any real interference with her ideals. Later in history the characteristics which were manifested by the Protestant devotees were the same as those exhibited by the devotees of Romanism. The Protestant mother, within her household, removed from the conflicts of the world, reverencing her ideals, earnestly hoped for their universal attainment, because she knew nothing of the natural laws which forbade such attainment. To those surrounded by the cloister walls, or secluded within the bosom of

the family, ideal precepts may seem real; love for enemies may become a pleasing dream. The sentiment of non-resistance did, in fact, possess the imagination of the individual devotees of all the earlier Christians as the sure means by which holiness was to be attained. With the fatuity of reverence, even conflict became idealized. The Romish nun, if she heard of the battle of Lützen, summoned through her imagination the picture of a conflict between the hosts of the Lord, represented by Romanism, and those of Satan, represented by Protestantism. The Protestant Swedish maiden dreamed of the same battle as one in which the wickedness of an anti-Christ, in the person of a Pope, was arrayed against the divine truth of the Lutheran creed.

If the Church succeeded in producing in individuals, or in classes, examples of earnest effort to practise sacred ideals, these examples, it will be seen, were always secured upon the condition of the separation of the Church's votaries from that contact with the world, which would have illustrated the impossibility of realizing the ideals. When the Ecclesiastical Power itself came to deal directly with the enmity which the world entertained for it, it manifested a thorough realization of the fact that it had not merely visionary powers to meet, but enemies of flesh and blood; that it had not simply imaginary resistance to encounter, but resistance of the sternest and most real kind. It accordingly turned its face from idealities to realities; it sought its inspiration for its actual conduct, not from the Sermon on the Mount, but from the Psalmist. Its prayers were

not that its enemies might be blessed, but that they might be scattered by the power of the Lord, and consumed in wrath; that Heaven's indignation might take hold of them; that their habitations might become desolate; that iniquity might be added unto their iniquity, so that they should not come to righteousness; that they might be blotted out of the book of the living;<sup>1</sup> that their days might be few; that their children might be fatherless; that there might be none to extend mercy to them, or to favor their fatherless children.<sup>2</sup> Nor was it only in dealing with the world at large as the enemy of God that such conduct characterized the Church. In every schism which arose, the dominant power exerted a spirit anything but non-resistant or persuasive. As each schism grew, the intensity of the anathema grew with it, until at last the Reformation came, bringing with it more bitter and relentless warfare than was ever known in the world. The conduct which characterized the Church of Rome has characterized every ecclesiastical body since the Reformation, the only difference being a difference in degree, and such difference arose from the counteracting influence of the different sects—a counteraction which could not result otherwise than to moderate the pre-existing intensity of reverent feeling.

It must be obvious that the aggressiveness of Church power, such as I have indicated, could not in the nature of things have been otherwise; for, if ecclesiastical authority, whether exerted by one

<sup>1</sup> Psalms lxix.<sup>2</sup> Psalms cix.

or by many organizations, had really sought to practise in the world the precepts enjoined in cloister and household, Church organization must have disappeared from the face of the earth. Actual non-resistance, efforts to practise love for enemies, free alms-giving, together, would have reduced it to abject submission and poverty. It will be seen then, that the behavior of Christianity, considered as comprising all organizations claiming to be Christian organizations, exhibits one quality by its employment of its power, and quite another by the injunction of its precepts. There is thus a contradiction which expresses an inherent dualism, but a contradiction which is necessary to the very being of theologic organization.

That which mainly concerns us here is a corollary which arises from the fact of this dualism. What relation has Christian Theology, as expressed through its various organizations taken together, to those principles of justice which may be inferred from and confirmed by human experience? Obviously, neither the devotees of theology, by their efforts to realize the ideal injunctions, nor theology itself as an organized power by the behavior manifested in its internecine contests, nor in its contests with secularism, afford us examples of such justice. Indeed, the efforts of the devotees to realize the injunctions of the ecclesiastical power, when judged by the consequences of these efforts, comport quite as little with the principles of such justice as does the actual behavior of sects in dealing with each other, or dealing with the enmity of the world at large. We have



seen how the efforts of the devotees of Christianity to practise the ideals enjoined by Christianity defeat the very ends intended to be accomplished ; how persistent and indiscriminate alms-giving but serves to encourage mendicancy and stimulate imposture ; how efforts to practise real non-resistance but encourage the rule of force ; how efforts to realize the ideal of universal love but confuse the minds of those who make these efforts touching the actual qualities of love ; how, in a word, all the indiscrimination which characterizes reverent idealism in its far-reaching consequences interrupts and obstructs those true relations between man and man by which society is best maintained.

A great Sacred System which by those in control of its different organizations enjoins upon devotees reverence for ideal rules of conduct, whilst all its organizations engage in practices which, although necessary for their existence and growth, are glaringly inconsistent with realizable justice, can never be said to be a System which promotes the moral and intellectual growth of mankind. Christianity historically considered comprises just such a System. The supreme value which theology places upon dogmatic faith as a foundation for conduct lies at the root of the whole difficulty ; it is primarily this which has caused all ecclesiastical power of whatever name or phase, to manifest antagonism between its precepts and its practices. It is this which illustrates at last the solecism of its claim for self-justification, in enjoining on the one hand upon submissive votaries, the duty of efforts

to practise the impracticable, and at the same time committing itself as an organization to acts which are out of all congruity with common justice.

Thus by a study of the historical behavior of all sects comprising Christianity, we realize that although each of its component sects claims the value of good intention and the necessity of faith in supersensual things as furnishing a universal principle of the determination for right conduct, the sweeping claim loses all its value in every effort of specific application which each sect makes. It is impossible, where a sense is held sacred, or an intention held supreme as the final gauge of correct thought or correct action, that an individual or an organized body of individuals, or a number of such bodies possessed with this theory, can adequately deal with justice as a principle of practice. The imminent influence of this sense itself is sufficient to make the application impossible; the intensity of emotion which underlies all phases of faith in supersensual things, compels the authority in the custody of any particular set of dogma to approve or disapprove each act of man's life as that act falls into or out of accord with an accepted phase of feeling. An examination so proceeding cannot possibly be made to harmonize with one in which the unimpassioned judgment is employed. Each body of authority, by manifesting its phase of faith and holding this phase sacred, must, from the very necessity of its being, derive its estimate of the qualities of justice from intense impulse, and thus preclude itself from studying normal conduct and considering ob-

jectively the consequences of normal conduct. Nor can any sect thus holding its emotions as of supreme authority, deal impartially with any question which can arise between itself and another sect or other sects. We can easily realize in secular life that to make a power, impelled by emotion, the final arbiter in a cause to which that power is a party, would be to make such a power the final judge of its own cause. Every theologic sect is a self-constituted body, assuming the power to determine between itself and others. It thus professes to be the court of final appeal for itself and for all others.

There is, then, within the bounds of Christianity, in what it calls its principles, a confusion regarding the sanctions of faith and of conduct, brought about by the dominance of the sacred sense, a confusion which produces the most untoward results touching fundamental morals.

Historical Christianity has caused each of its sects to behave in support of different dogma with a rigor precisely measurable by the intensity with which each entertained faith and was enabled to exert authority. That there has come about a moderation of theologic aggression is due to the fact of sectarian division, which in turn has been brought about by the widening and constraining influence of secular knowledge. This progressive moderation reflects with striking fidelity the development of such knowledge. It is in itself the underlying cause of the weakening of the sense of authority, secular and theologic, manifesting itself in the increasing division of the assumed authorities, thus creating a necessity

for a yielding, however reluctantly, by each sect, of that sense of supremacy by which theologic ideals of faith and conduct were formerly held. Every reverent individual, and every existing church organization moves under this influence. It is an influence which underlies all fixed creeds, and tempers the absoluteness of the claim formerly set forth as the universal postulate of theology, that all who do not accept specific conclusions are immoral and dangerous.

The secular student, because he is indifferent alike to the creed of Romanism and of Protestantism, because he has, indeed, lost all deference for the assumption of authority by theology, is enabled to realize the difficulties of the theologian. He perceives how the emotions governing the theologian's relations to the believer and to the disbeliever cause a misconception of justice. He perceives how unconscious the theologian is of those mental processes by which theologic dogma is exalted over morality, and how intensity of faith distorts the capacity for discerning right between man and man. He sees that, actuating all theology, there is a sense of supremacy, personal in its character, dependent upon feeling, which the theologian accepts as the highest criterion of human conduct; and that, by this same sense of supremacy, every theologian determines it to be the duty of all men to believe in his phase of dogma. The secular student realizes how impossible it is for the Church as an organization, comprising all sects and individuals, to estimate justice as a principle of conduct universal in its

application. He perceives that the vice of organized theology, and the narrowness of the individual theologian, spring from faith in the supersensual. He sees also that the same intensity of faith which causes the organization itself to assert control, in one degree or another, over individual conviction, also causes the organization and its individual adherents to estimate justice from the delusive standards of emotion, and that there is thus entailed upon theology, and upon each one of theology's votaries, an incapacity to reach the true laws of correct living.

It must be plain then that between the theologic and secular methods of investigating human behavior there is an irreconcilable difference; that the conclusions regarding justice which are secularly derived, importing the relinquishment of all effort to apply the Scriptural precepts, and the substitution therefor of a determination to study the object-lessons of life, have a far better warrant than have those conclusions which are derived from holding in supremacy ideal texts; and that, historically considered, the objective study of behavior as the means of discovering the principles of justice has been coincident with the great evolutionary movement by which a progressively higher type of justice has been realized in each succeeding step of civilization. Although, indeed, conceptions of justice arise in part from what is called the instinct of man, these have always been differentiated and discriminated by the objective study of examples of conduct as the only means of making the study and the realization of conduct

progressive, as the fullest and most adequate method of reaching the highest results. As the mind of man has been impelled by surrounding influences to discriminate between different phases of emotion, it has through this very process attained a definiteness just the opposite of that theologic vagueness which inheres in the worship of ideals.

Whilst it is impossible of course to form any reasonable conception of what civilization might have been had Christianity never existed, it is, I think, an altogether warrantable conclusion derived from the study of Christianity as a whole, that it has had a far more retarding than progressive influence upon the civilization of the world.

But there is even a broader corollary to be derived from the influences of secularism than any I have suggested; it is this: that just as man is impelled by his surroundings to study the emotions by their development, as exhibited in actual behavior, he is gradually impelled to the conclusion that these emotions are but finite and relative qualities, and nothing more than finite and relative qualities, and that the great theologic effort to make them attributes of an Infinite Being in such a manner that this being, although omnipotent, shall be possessed of but the virtuous parts of these emotions, exhibits an inconsistency that can never be squared with the fundamental principles of morality by any means which we as human beings have of testing those principles. If, then, we take our stand upon certain universally recognized principles of morality, I think we shall find the conclusion irresistible, not only that there is

no warrant to be derived from anything we know or can know of human conduct to justify an inference that the Power which is beyond mental reach is governed by the emotions which are indicated by the terms justice and injustice, love and hate, fear and fortitude, as we learn these qualities in our own behavior, but that there is on the other hand a warrant for inferring from the whole behavior of natural law that that Power is non-personal.

The usual purpose for which the theologian employs the argument set forth in the words, "He who made the eye, shall He not see? or, He who made the ear, shall He not hear?" is to imply that the God who made the eye must see with something like the organ of vision which he made, only in a greater degree, and that the God who made the ear, must hear with something like the organ of hearing in man, only in a vastly more acute and searching way. This, I say, is the primary inference, and it is the inference upon which the theologian primarily depends; but when he is brought face to face with the immediate consequences of his inference, namely, the conception of a God in human form, he flies to an irrelevant conclusion. It is then that to him the senses of seeing and hearing assumed to be in the Supreme Power, are no longer of a kind to be inferred from man's senses, since, being infinite, they cannot be limited by form, or time, or space. They are, after all, then, not such senses as are suggested by the eye and the ear of man; and so the argument specifically meant by the theologian to convey to the mind the proof of a per-

sonal God, entirely fails of its purpose. Indeed, thus pressed to realize logical consequences, the theologian himself sets up a theory contradicting his postulate; namely, that God, being a spirit, sees and hears in a manner that cannot be conceived or understood by us. The examination of the theological assumption and the effort definitely to apply it thus leads to so palpable an absurdity that it compels the theologian employing it to fly to mystery.<sup>1</sup>

A specific theologic argument of the representative metaphysical theologian will afford us the means of more definitely learning how the mystery thus reached is treated; and nothing can better illustrate the insufficiency of dialectic art, employed by the theologian when pressed upon by science, than the endeavor to reconcile with the human sense of justice the dogma of a personal God, and reconcile the duty of man to believe in that personality. Such a philosophic argument is found in Dean Mansel's effort to thread his way through the maze of mystery. Mr. Mansel is classed as a disciple of Sir William Hamilton, although he disagrees with his teacher in some important particulars. He has cultivated one province of thought which is not a prominent feature of Hamilton's philosophy, by applying the philosophy of the conditioned to the theologic field; the teacher and the pupil are one, nevertheless, in the

<sup>1</sup> The theological illustration which I have thus indicated is of a kind which was very commonly employed thirty years ago, but which through definiteness of inquiry has more recently fallen into disuse. The Bridgewater Treatises belong to this category. But whilst the illustration has been abandoned, the theologic vagueness which it illustrates still remains.



fact that the corner-stone of the philosophy of each rests upon the recognition of the necessary relativity of all secular knowledge. Mr. Mansel holds the Absolute and Infinite to be inconceivable; and in striving to conceive what he thus recognizes as inaccessible to his faculties, he inevitably falls into self-contradiction.<sup>1</sup> He posits God as an Absolute and Infinite Being, and he leaves no doubt whatever as to what he means by the terms absolute and infinite. He says: "By the absolute is meant that which exists in and by itself, having no necessary relation to any other knowledge"; and he identifies this meaning of an absolute being with Hegel's absolute being, which contains in itself "all that is actual, even evil included"; for he says: "That which is conceived as absolute and infinite must be conceived as containing within itself the sum of not only all actual, but all possible modes of being."<sup>2</sup> He shows conclusively how impossible it is for the human mind to entertain a conception of this absolute; but in doing this he all the more prominently exhibits the theologic solecism of holding that it is the bounden duty of man not only to believe that God is such an absolute being, but also to believe certain definite but inconceivable attributes concerning him.<sup>3</sup> In this he seems to me to ignore an

<sup>1</sup> *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, John Stuart Mill, New York, 1884, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Bampton Lectures: *Limits of Religious Thought*, fourth edition, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> As Mill says, in commenting upon this course: "One may well agree with Mr. Mansel that this farrago of contradictory attributes cannot be conceived, but what shall we say of his equally positive

argument from which there is no escape ; namely, that from the very fact that the mind of man is finite, and knowledge relative, it follows that man cannot justly be required to seek to entertain reverent conceptions of the Infinite and the Absolute ; for, if anything in the world is contrary to all that we know of fairness, it is to demand of a man as a sacred duty, an effort to do what is recognized, by him who makes the demand, as being utterly beyond man's power ; and when such an exaction is set up as part of the sacred office of theology, the inevitable influence is to repress man's intellectual and moral being.

We may further measure the value of Mansel's method in dealing with the Infinite and the Absolute, by employing his own words. With admirable candor he has given us a paragraph which relieves such measurement of any difficulty. He says :

"It is a fact which experience forces upon us, and which it is useless, were it possible, to disguise, that the representation of God after the model of the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving, averment that it must be believed? If this be what the absolute is, what does he mean by saying that we must believe God to be the absolute?"

Anyone who may wish to follow Mansel's argument upon man's duty thus to believe, and also to find elaborate refutation of the irrelevant conclusions which mark it, may consult Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. For myself, I am concerned only in considering the moral influence arising from the kind of reasoning which concludes that it is the bounden duty of man to believe not only that which he cannot conceive, but that which by the very effort to conceive, contorts the mind out of all normal proportion.

is not sufficient to account for all the phenomena exhibited by the course of his natural Providence. The inflicting of physical suffering, the permission of moral evil, the adversity of the good, the prosperity of the wicked, the crimes of the guilty involving the misery of the innocent, the tardy appearance of moral and religious knowledge in the world<sup>1</sup>—are facts which no doubt are reconcilable, we know not how, with the Infinite Goodness of God, but which certainly are not to be explained on the supposition that its sole and sufficient type is to be found in the finite goodness of man.”<sup>2</sup>

What can this concession import other than that “the finite goodness of man,” as we can understand that goodness—that goodness by which man seeks to prevent the infliction of physical suffering, to restrain evil, to promote virtue, to repress wickedness, to punish the guilty, to relieve innocence, to advance the cause of knowledge—that goodness cannot be a sufficient type of infinite goodness, because infinite goodness embraces not only the goodness which we know, but also the evils which Mr. Mansel has enumerated? In other words, is it not necessary, by Mr. Mansel’s theory, to claim that the infinite goodness ascribed to his God is not such goodness as that which we know and admire among our fellow men, for the reason that it mysteriously

<sup>1</sup> If Mr. Mansel had turned his efforts from endeavoring to conceive the inconceivable Absolute, to noting the relation of cause and consequence with reference to the spread of knowledge, he might have learned that the tardy appearance of at least moral knowledge in the world has resulted largely from reverent efforts by theology to restrain that inquiry by which such knowledge is developed.

<sup>2</sup> *Limits of Religious Thought*, p. 13.

includes all that we as human beings know of badness? I use the word "mysteriously" here, because by the theologic theory infinite goodness is set forth as including evil in such a manner that the evil mysteriously disappears on the theory that the all-inclusive Power is supremely good.

The dilemma of theology in Mr. Mansel's custody consists, first, in the effort to explain how an Absolute Power embracing all good, and all evil also, can be a supremely good Power entirely devoid of all evil; secondly, in the fact that when we realize the impossibility of explaining this contradiction by the employment of any knowledge we have of what constitutes goodness, it thereupon becomes necessary for us, as the sole condition by which we may be brought to an appreciation of what ideal goodness is, to reject all human knowledge; and, thirdly, in the theologic demand that it is the sacred duty of all men to believe in an Absolute Being thus metaphysically equipped. The circle of theologic contradiction is thus dialectically accomplished.

It is only when we drop our reverence for ideals, and resolutely address ourselves to the study of the simple qualities of justice, love, and goodness, that we come to realize how entirely human and personal these qualities are. "Language," as Mr. Mill says, "has no meaning for the words Just, Merciful, Benevolent, save that in which we predicate them of our fellow-creatures, and unless that is what we intend to express by them we have no business to employ the words. If, in affirming them of God, we do not mean to affirm these very qualities, differing only as

greater in degree, we are neither philosophically nor morally entitled to affirm them at all."

Whenever we turn from ideal contemplation to study human emotions specifically as they are manifested in love and in hate, in justice and injustice, in goodness and in badness, we learn that love is always the correlative of hate, justice of injustice, and goodness of badness; that each is so associated with the other that the one always implies its opposite; we learn further that the emotions taken together exhibit degrees in quality and in quantity; that love is more intense than is friendship, and friendship than justice. What is of still more consequence, may we not infer that the emotions necessarily import the limitations which belong to personality, since all we know of them, or can know of them, is derived from the study of their manifestations in mortal life under the conditions of personality which environ us. May we not therefore rationally conclude that emotions are themselves only varied expressions of individual and mortal being; that they mark the limitations of personality? With what consistency, then, can theology posit an Ultimate Being who is at once an emotional and a personal being, and yet without the limitations and conditions which we everywhere observe as essential qualities of emotion and personality? Are we not, in short, impelled to the conclusion that the God conceived by the theologians as being at once omnipotent, and yet limited by conditions, as a God who is anthropomorphic in being personal, and non-anthropomorphic in being unlimited and absolute, is a self-contradictory and

impossible power; and when we consider the emotions as they operate in men's minds may we not conclude that the anthropomorphic phase of being which theology attributes to divinity is nothing other than a reflex of our human feeling, and that the non-anthropomorphic conception which theology commands is nothing other than an effort of theology to avoid by appeal to mystery, the contradictory character of such reflex? And what can be the moral value of the demand that man shall reverently accept as a sacred duty these theologic contradictions which so inevitably tend to distort his reasoning faculty?

When the theologic subtleties in which intense feeling is the basis of the theory of a personal God, cease to move us, and when we are impelled to rational inferences from the study of actual life and the behavior of Nature, we reach conclusions which, whilst entirely at variance with those reached by theology, are entirely consistent with morals and the intellect. If, in this frame of mind, we endeavor to draw the largest inferences regarding the Power beyond us, which theologians call God, turning from the inferences of our intenser emotions, and studying the manifestations of all Nature, we are enabled to discern a vastly larger Power than a personal Power—a Power which by all its manifestations is non-personal and non-emotional. In a word, constant and undeviating natural law.

Gravitation, light, heat, chemical affinity, and electricity—in a word, all force—so far as these are understood by science, or can be comprehended by

a study of their manifestations, produce no single instance of immediate consequence from which we may infer anything like motives of justice or injustice, morality or immorality, goodness or badness. When, by the operation of the law of gravitation, a human being is destroyed, the force which immediately destroys him manifests neither justice nor injustice, morality nor immorality—it is a physical, universal, and impersonal force. The theologian, by assuming a Power beyond, and clothing it with personality, sets up a Power which is really less extensive. The inferences he draws are not from the objective study of phenomena manifested by Nature, but from his own feeling regarding these phenomena—a means by which he misinterprets fact. And when theologians of different phases come to deal with what they assume to be a divine intent regarding acts of Nature, their individual interpretations of this intent, when contrasted with one another, always exhibit antagonism. These interpretations conflict with one another because they arise from the emotions of different individuals. The Romanist sees in a given act of Nature a divine commendation of his faith. The Protestant infers from the same act a divine condemnation of Romanism. The individual theologic inferences drawn from the manifestations of impersonal law are primarily prompted by the individual emotion of sacredness for the dogma which the individual theologian holds. They are thus the results of subjective feeling—reflexes of individual emotion. Meanwhile, the secular student, divested of sacred feeling, and

studying Nature objectively, draws logical and rational inferences from Nature as an impersonal force.

We are all bound to admit that, so far as human experience and observation go, inanimate Nature does not *directly* exhibit any such personal qualities as are implied by emotion. We are all bound also to admit that, so far as human observation and experience go, we can know of personality only as manifested in form; that is, in the limitations of mortal being. Experience and observation, of themselves, have never taught us, and never can teach us any other kind of emotion than mortal emotion. If we are ever to learn of the qualities of emotion as something separate from and independent of our mortal being, we must learn this from some other source than our experience, or our observation of phenomena. Theology here comes in and assumes to give us, with assurance of the highest certainty, dogma which contradicts the inferences of experience and observation. It essays to set forth the conception of an absolute divinity without physical limitation. It assumes for this divinity a Power greater than all the impersonal manifestations of Nature. It assumes that a personality, which by all we can know is limited, originates and dominates an impersonality, which by all we can rationally infer, is unlimited; and that this limited personality is the efficient cause and controller of the unlimited and impersonal Power—thus endeavoring, in response to a sacred wish, to furnish as absolute truth, a theory which contradicts the results of the normal exercise



of all human faculty. It further essays to assert of this Power, definite attributes, which, when set forth as absolute, are contradictory in themselves, besides being contradicted by the very division manifested in conflicting creed. Metaphysical theologians, like Mr. Mansel, who have been impelled to accept the relativity of human knowledge, when driven to this dilemma, seek their way out by assuming that the personality of the Ultimate Power is, after all, not personality, or at least personality of a kind contradicting the only kind of which we know or can know anything—in a word, that it is a mystery. Theology, then, when urged by science to find its way out of this labyrinth, simply goes farther into the labyrinth.

At this point there is for an instant, but only for an instant, a partial agreement between theology and science, for here both come face to face with what each must recognize as inaccessible to the mind of mortal man. The agreement consists merely in the recognition of this fact. Thenceforward, the parting of the ways begins, by the assumption which theology makes that from mystery there is derived the highest certainty regarding objective truths of the divinity, which may be made not only to dominate, but to contradict that relative knowledge which belongs to the domain of science. It is here that science must forever part company with theology, for the reason that science must insist that the mind of man can conceive attributes only by the use of his normal faculties—only through the study of the sequence of phenomena, and that all attempts to

employ other means but result in intellectual confusion. Science can recognize no means of knowing in what personality consists, save those which are derived from the experiences of mortal personality. It can recognize no means of delineating personality other than those afforded by the search for the natural characteristics of mortal personality, and it is through this kind of investigation that the student of science learns certain unfailing characteristics of emotional and personal being as they are manifested in the behavior between men regarding justice, love, and fortitude. Thus studying them, he finds them to be the necessary antitheses of injustice, hate, and fear. He finds them all alike the product of and associated with limited being. He realizes that he can no more disassociate them in his thought than he can disassociate them all taken together from the idea of mortal personality; and that this fact, so far from forbidding, warrants the conclusion that qualities wrapt up as our emotions are in finite being, in themselves expressing the limits of that being, cannot be inferred as characteristics of a being more ample than that which personality limits.

It is by a logical necessity that science is impelled to declare it to be impossible for man to conceive of definite attributes of that which exists beyond the limitations of his mind; impossible, for any man or set of men, therefore, to give definite attributes of that which theology calls a personal God: it is by the same necessity that science is impelled to deny all that right which is assumed by theology to impress upon mankind the acceptance of a revelation,

all right to assume what theology calls a spiritual illumination as the means of defining the inscrutable, and all right to call upon the world to accept its definitions as holy and final; and science points to the products which result from the assumptions of theology as exhibiting nothing more than an effort to clothe itself with a power which contradicts the different instances of the assumed exercise of this power by different theologies. Science, indeed, thus challenges the whole theology, and denies its moral efficacy. It posits as irrefutable fact, that the limitations of a man's personal and emotional feelings render it impossible for him to define that which exists beyond these limitations, and the scientific scholar insists that theology as well as science is subject to these limitations. Turning from the study then of his own feelings, the student of science employs himself with the objective manifestations of Nature as the only means of determining the whole relation of man to Nature and of man to man. Realizing that all inanimate Nature progresses without respect to such emotions as justice or injustice, love or hate, and observing the magnitude of the laws of motion as they exhibit themselves in coordinating the systems of the universe, he concludes that there are qualities of that Ultimate Power which transcend the definite conception of man; and that particularly is it the case that inasmuch as human emotions and personality constitute the only media through which any measurements of quality may be made, he concludes that all efforts at positive definition of the supersensual are futile; he,

however, concludes from this pregnant negation that man is not prevented from inferring the fact of the transcendency of Ultimate Power over the emotions; and he may rationally believe that that Power is greater than any of which he knows anything or can know anything; that it is greater than love and hate, justice and injustice, greater than all personality, and that hence is justified the secular inference that being greater, it must in some way be that which, for want of better designation, may be called infinitely superior and better; beyond this all efforts to give to that Power precise attributes are vain, and all assumptions from whatever source, to command reverence for any attributes so given cannot be justified upon any moral or intellectual ground. The secular student accepting this attitude of science, recognizing the non-emotional and non-personal, and believing that impersonal laws are more comprehensive and far-reaching than those which are expressed by the emotions, and that the emotional being of man is but a lesser part of the great manifestation of Nature; reaches the general conclusion in complete accord with science that there is something impersonal in Nature which is transcendently greater than the product of the emotions which are found in man's being,—something immeasurably greater than justice which he finds linked with injustice, greater than love which he finds the correlative of hate, and so he concludes that justice and injustice, love and hate, thus linked together, are but the limited incidents of a universal law, and that this law transcends them as the infinite does

the finite; he thus denies the attributes which theology seeks to make of God, and his inferences regarding the impersonality of Transcendent Power are consistent with all other knowledge, and not, as with the theologian, contradictory. It in this manner becomes obvious, to the secular student at least, that it cannot be possible with the progress of knowledge for theology permanently to maintain a supremacy for its sacred ideals.

As I have before said, the moral questions involved in this issue are of the greatest importance. The mind released from theologic restraint and theologic confusion, can study the qualities of love and justice and their correlatives as human qualities, with far more clearness, and produce better ethical results than can possibly be derived from any reverent contemplation.

Returning to the contrast of the theologic with the secular theory in order to make another application, let us ask if there were that which Arnold suggests, a personal "Power not of ourselves which makes for righteousness," whether there must not also of necessity be another personal Power not of ourselves which makes for wickedness? In other words, is it not an unavoidable conclusion that the reasoning which assumes a personal God requires also the assumption of a personal Devil? Is it possible to divest personality of its inherent quality? Nothing seems to me to exhibit the decline of modern theology more than the effort of the theologians to curtail it by eliminating the personal representative of evil. The older theology pro-

ceeded with far more consistency in maintaining a relation so necessary, and in supplying, along with the God to represent the good, the Satan to represent the evil; but theology, whether new or old, cannot so long as it lasts thus be dismembered. Nature refuses to relieve it from the difficulty; Nature denies the severance; it is for this reason that whenever the personal Devil goes out of theology, as he seems to be doing, he must take one half of theology with him, and moreover indicate by his very going, the impending departure of the personal God.

The conclusion must gradually be reached then that the ideal justice of the theologian is not only not greater in degree or quality than is the justice learned by secular study, but that it is of far less value, and that all attempts to render it mysterious and ideal lessen the capacity of man for realizing what it is. I can conceive of no appeal to the human mind so forcible as that found in the logic of natural law, which of itself teaches the non-personality of that Ultimate Power miscalled by the theologian a personal God. It is an argument from which no one, at least no one who believes in the relativity of knowledge, and who can make his study objective and dispassionate, can possibly escape. It finds the quality of justice in the actual behavior of justice among men, and it determines that all efforts to erect a sense of justice other than that learned from human behavior are interferences with the capacities of man to ascertain real qualities; and it is an argument which carries at last the conclusion

that the Power beyond human ken is not influenced by anything like man's emotions, that it operates by fixed laws which are more comprehensive in their import than those which are derived from intense subjective feeling.

By as much as a dispassionate investigation in any conflict between men is a better means of rendering justice between them than an emotional or partisan treatment of their case can be, by so much is a calm search into Nature's law for relative truth superior to unquestioning reverence for sacred ideals; and from these considerations there can be but little doubt that secularism affords a better means for the advancement of knowledge and for the advancement of the well-being of mankind than has ever been or can be afforded by theology.

Besides the direct influences attending secular inquiry, we should not lose sight of those great incidental advantages conferred by secular study upon the tone and character of the human mind. When man's mind is relieved of the theological prepossession that there must of mysterious necessity be a God with emotions at once similar and dissimilar to those which we have; when he comes to conclude that the emotions are only expressions of human relation; when, in a word, he thoroughly abandons his reverence for the mysterious and relies upon the manifestations of natural law, he becomes entirely relieved of that mental distortion accompanying all efforts to reconcile the irreconcilable, and to fit into the theory of the universe an emotional God and an emotional Devil; he becomes relieved of that

theologic necessity of seeking to convince himself that God may be all-powerful and all-good, and yet be compelled to submit part of his domain to an essentially equal power in the spirit of the Devil; he feels no longer under any necessity to adopt such theories as, that a God all-powerful, all-good, all-wise, and all-just, must from his omniscience predestine the great majority of the human race to everlasting perdition on account of the born incapacity of this great majority to hold in reverence an utterly grotesque notion of justice, power, goodness, virtue, wisdom, and love; for when fully recognizing the Ultimate Power as non-personal and non-emotional, his intellect has risen above the necessity of sacred self-contradiction, above the melancholy and irreconcilable conclusions of the theologian—the metaphysical and scholastic doctrines over which the schoolmen wrangled, and which hung for ages like an incubus upon the human mind.

It is because of the intellectual unreality and the vagueness of theology, that secular thought, with its reality, its definiteness, and its integrity, is gradually pressing theology to the wall; it is by reason of the fact that secular thought has abandoned the reverent ideals that it has become enabled to discriminate between the different qualities of the emotions, and to assign to each its appropriate place; it is on this account that secular thought, with its reality, furnishes a better moral basis than theology possesses, and it is on this account that secular ethics are gradually taking the place of those of theology. The Church continues, and will continue to contend



against the kind of reasoning which I have here employed ; nor will any verbal reasoning affect it ; for, as I have heretofore shown, whilst verbal argument can only at best reach minds which have already been affected by secular surroundings, and are for this reason only in the line of its conclusions, this fact illustrates the lesser importance of such argument. The kind of force which does convince is that which comes from the exhibition of the fruits of knowledge, the illustrations which daily become more and more complete as knowledge grows, impelling the individual mind to modes of thought which it before resisted, but which as they instil themselves induce conclusions of secularism.

## CHAPTER X.

### PROGRESSIVE AND CONSERVATIVE PHASES OF THE SECULAR MOVEMENT.

**I**N the last chapter I sought to show how science and theology are respectively related to ethics. I shall postpone the discussion of the general morals of secularism to the next chapter, and in the meantime will endeavor to consider two aspects of the general secular movement, one of which marks its progressive and the other its conservative phase. The progressive phase results from the advance of science, and the conservative from the exercise of authority, resting upon assumed spiritual instinct, sacred tradition, and revelation. Each of these is characterized by a different standard of certainty. The progressive phase is distinguished by a disposition to inquire ; the conservative by a disposition to revere. By the first, the subjection of all feeling of reverence is held as necessary to unfettered inquiry ; by the second, this feeling of reverence is held as the main support of conviction. The sense of certainty which I class as secular, then rests upon knowledge which has been tested by doubt and investigation, and confirmed by its accord with natural law. That which I class as reverent, begins with

reverence for some authority concerning the supernatural, and accepts this authority as final. The first tends the mind to doubt, and the second tends it to reject doubt. Just as one or the other of these two senses is predominant in the individual mind, it promotes rationalism or religion, and whenever the two meet, they manifest the conflict of opposites. If we attempt to study their relative value by introspection, we encounter at the very threshold an insuperable difficulty, because the reverent sense implies prepossessions assumed to be so superior to reason that the least challenge which reason directly makes only intensifies the tenacity with which this sense retains its place. In order, then, adequately to measure the relative value of these two senses, the behavior of each must be studied, not as at first it seems to exhibit itself in the subject's mind, but as it manifests itself in the minds of others; and in order clearly to do this it is obvious that the student's mind must first have been so moved by the influence of surroundings that he shall be disposed to make his study circumspective. Indeed, it is only in this way that one can appreciate the difficulties of introspection. Thus studying the mental movement the student will realize how in every mind in which the sacred sense predominates over the secular, there is manifested a degree of assurance which causes its possessor resolutely to refuse the influence of reason, and how, conversely, in every mind in which the secular dominates over the sacred sense, reason constitutes the supreme mental motive.

Circumstances which have operated upon Western civilization, have developed certain differences between the minds of the Western nations and those of the Oriental fire-worshippers. Let us look at one phase of these differences, in order to illustrate the indirect effect of secular knowledge upon religious prepossession. It is not difficult for any of us belonging to Western civilization, whether theologian or sceptic, to realize the obstacles which lie in the way of an Oriental fire-worshipper in any effort he might make towards acquiring a knowledge of the laws of light, heat, electricity, and motion. Because we have learned these laws, from impressions derived from an objective study of the behavior of Nature, our knowledge of them enables us to perceive that the reverence with which the fire-worshipper regards them makes it impossible for him to pursue an intelligent inquiry into their real qualities. Nor is it difficult for us to understand that if this worshipper ever comes to learn anything of the operation of these natural laws, it will be only as secular knowledge first indirectly reaches his mind through the illustrations resulting from the inquiries of others, and that when it does so reach, its object-lessons will gradually modify his sense of reverence for phases of Nature which he before worshipped. But the Western theologian, easily as he may perceive this, fails to apply its corollaries to his own case. The nearer he approaches his own sacred prepossessions, the further does he get from the realization of the fact that the law which operates in the case of the Oriental fire-worshipper is the same law as that which

operates in his own case, the difference in its manner of operation being a difference of degree and not of kind. The theologian of Western civilization and the Parsee devotee are alike illustrations of the universal fact that it is impossible for any one whose sacred prepossessions prevent his inquiry and his examination, directly to acquire a knowledge of natural law.

What, now, let us ask, is the attitude of Nature toward the discouragement or encouragement of each of the two senses of certainty which we are considering? In studying Nature's manifestations, do we find that she anywhere encourages man's supplication regarding her secrets? Does she not indeed on the contrary always discriminate against reverence, by withholding the direct and full import of these secrets from him whose reverence forbids him to inquire, and does she not, on the other hand, discriminate in favor of non-reverence by awarding the fuller knowledge of her laws only to him, who, having dropped his reverence, proceeds dispassionately to investigate? Has she not always conditioned the lesser degree of knowledge of her laws which the reverent minds reach, upon the fact that these minds are unconscious of the definite and natural manner in which secular knowledge reaches and convinces them? Whilst certain of the great laws of Nature, such as that of gravitation, and certain of the corollaries from these laws have indeed become a heritage of the reverent as well as the secular, they have reached the reverent mind only by a process in which knowledge has mined underneath, and affected

unseen the reverent sense; and in every instance the knowledge and the corollaries first come to those whose sense of quiet inquiry has displaced the sense of reverence, with reference to the specific items of knowledge sought. If the holy anathema, assumed by theology to have been declared in the Garden of Eden against knowledge, had been entirely successful—if reverence had thus become complete and universal—the first step of physical science would have been impossible. We have but to reflect upon the intrinsic qualities of reverence fully to appreciate how of very necessity a man cannot doubt or investigate or inquire concerning that which he worships.

Nature in its largest sense, by the admission of both theology and science, is a manifestation of a Power which lies beyond all phenomena—a Power to which theology professes to give definite attributes, and which science professes to judge of only by the manifestations of phenomena. If Nature, to the extent of these manifestations, is a consistent expression of that Power, we may consistently examine her behavior to infer how that Power itself stands disposed to man's two senses of certainty. We may infer its indisposition toward his sense of worship, by the manner in which it directly refuses knowledge to him whose reverence prevents his inquiry, and by the manner in which it rewards with knowledge him who does inquire. If there is any import whatever in its behavior, it is that it impels inquiry and discourages reverence for ignorance. This is the interpretation which science makes of the Power

lying behind Nature as manifested through Nature. Let us turn for a moment from this interpretation to examine the interpretation of theology. Theology not only ignores, but directly contradicts Nature's manifestation of this Power. It was under this theologic interpretation that Roger Bacon was imprisoned; it was under this that St. Augustine would hear nothing of the antipodes; Wesley nothing of the Copernican theory, and the Dean of York nothing of geology. It was by the general application of this theory that the "primal eldest curse" was hurled against all knowledge, and the whole inquiring sense of man was associated with his fall from innocence into guilt. Turning again from the theologic estimate of this Power to the scientific, we find that expressing itself through Nature's manifestations, it has exhibited inexhaustible patience. Ever since man came upon the earth, it has shown itself indifferent to his sense of worship—it has endured his ignorance and his superstition, calmly awaiting the time when he, impelled by its illustrations of natural law, should of his own volition turn from worship and begin to inquire, and only when man himself thus moved, exchanged impassioned worship for secular inquiry, did it answer his questions. Only as he made this exchange did it confer that power on man which has enabled him to control natural forces, increase his strength, gain means of inter-communication, procure comfort, and secure a store of knowledge. The history of the acquisition of human knowledge is the history of secular or non-reverent inquiry. It needs no special education to

enable the lay mind to-day to realize some at least of the corollaries of the attitude of this Power, as indicated by Nature's manifestations, however the theologic mind may still so fail to realize them. Looking over history, we are met by the fact that man lived upon the earth thousands of years before he learned that it was round. His ignorance of the world in which he lived was not relieved by a revelation assuming to furnish an account of its creation by fiat about six thousand years ago, out of nothing, in six days, and by a Personal God, who, having wearied of his accomplishment, rested upon the seventh, and hallowed it. His ignorance taught him that God having created man, placed a ban upon him, setting forth as a condition of his happiness and innocence that he should abstain from all inquiry. Looking along the line of progress we may see how man, trembling under this interdiction, nevertheless began here and there, momentarily half forgetting the sacred imprecation, to learn that the earth was round, to find that it was of less importance in the universe than the revelation led him to believe. Moved by these discoveries, he inquired further, and found by the incontestable evidence of the rocks that death, which the sacred account set forth as something which first made its appearance as a consequence of inquiry and sin, really entered the world long before the advent of man. Following his questions, step by step, he became impressed with the fact that what formerly seemed caprices of Nature—ascribed by the sacred account to the direct interference of God



—were but the exhibition of an undeviating impersonal law. Passing from one step of inquiry to another, the mind of the inquirer became impressed with the constancy of natural law, and, gradually, with the insufficiency of the theory that the will of a supernatural being could contradict this law. When we reflect that such sacred authority invariably repressed inquiry into Nature's law as impious, we may realize how, from separate instances of repression, the general practice of repression came, to the extent of theologic power, to bar human knowledge. When we reflect how, on the other hand, discovery has been born of inquiry, notwithstanding the repression exerted by theologic authority; how it has gradually grown, and how, reinforced, it has produced the accumulated store of knowledge which stimulates the mind to further inquiry, and thus to the enlargement of the store, we may realize how it is that modern surroundings account for secular progress, and we may understand why, as the store of knowledge has grown, it has caused theology to decline.

If, then, from the actual behavior of Nature to the two senses of certainty in man's mind, we would infer the relative values of these two senses as means for the acquisition of knowledge, and of morals, too, we must keep our minds steadily upon this behavior. We may in this manner learn the whole difference between secularism and theology; we may appreciate how knowledge breeds knowledge; how it is justified by its own fruits; how it tends to modify reverence not only in regard to that which

we know, but to that which lies beyond our knowledge—our ignorance; how its whole movement, thus judged in the light of Nature's behavior, exhibits the force of a universal law, which, however interfered with by assumptions of spiritual illumination, must at last prevail.

I will briefly classify the actors in the modern movement, with reference to the manner in which different classes affect and are affected by this movement, and, incidentally, illustrate some of the peculiarities characterizing the movement of to-day as contrasted with its preceding stages, as that movement indicates the relative activity of the two senses. In attempting such a classification, I will premise that the lines cannot be definitely drawn, since all minds have certain qualities in common, and any classification that we may make, must include some qualities and peculiarities which belong to more than one class.

We may begin by considering as a class the ignorant and superstitious, who accept, without mental resistance, the authority nearest them, and who hold in reverence all they cannot understand. This is nearly everything, for whatever of mental activity there may be among them, is expressed in suspecting all knowledge as a culture derived from Satan. The constituents of this class can be moved only *en masse*, and their place is always at the extreme rear of the general movement. Enveloped in mental inertia, they exhibit but little direct benefit from the general uplifting of restraints upon thought, which has taken place in this century.

Nearly allied to this there is another large class whose constituents do very little thinking, and therefore receive but slight impression from the influence of modern surroundings. Within this class there are without doubt not a few individual instances in which the weakening of theologic restraints has induced a lessening sense of moral restraint. Nothing is more natural with men whose conduct is chiefly influenced by hope of reward or fear of punishment than that to the degree in which these are removed or become less impressive, there should be exhibited something like the abandon of license. In the first stages of the decline of reverence for sacred precepts and before the secular principles become appreciated and established, there is afforded the occasion for the exhibition of some of the most salient evils of transition. There are, therefore, among this class some for whom the transition seems in the early stage to furnish no compensation for the conditions from which they have been moved.

A far larger and more important class is comprised of those who are directly engaged in the great industries. These, under the influence of their surroundings, experience all the unrest which marks the present great transitional period. The vast extension of spontaneous thought induced by industrial development is here illustrated both in its beneficent and in some of its seemingly untoward aspects. This class in general is daily moving more and more into indifference for sacred authority, and manifests more and more an interest in the kind of knowledge which is born of industrial persuasion, and in the

present comparatively earlier stages of its movement much of its new spontaneous thought is characterized by a deficiency of skill and discipline. There are doubtless too within it elements which exhibit proclivities towards alliance with social and economic vagaries. The literature which mostly reaches this class is not of a kind calculated to produce mental discipline; it consists mainly of the daily newspaper and the novel. It must be owned that astronomy, geology, and political economy, and ethics, as these are taught by the average daily newspapers and by the works of the popular romantic writers, are not likely to produce either mental discipline or profound thinking in minds but recently brought into the region of spontaneous thought. Nevertheless, the more direct and constant influences among men engaged in industries are of a kind which tend rather, towards gradually disciplining them into practical lines of thought. Intimacy with the object-lessons of Nature,—with Nature in actual manifestation—moves them into channels where they generally tend to become the true coadjutors of science.

Another important class comprises those who, whilst not directly engaged in industry, are interested in it as students. Among these we may expect more that is theoretic and visionary than within the class last named; in their minds the formative influences of secularism have in one degree or another replaced the sacred with the more secular sense, and in this process there has been only a modification of the tendency towards the preponderance of theory.

Men, who by mental constitution are theoretic, and who by their surroundings have been led to abandon the sacred prepossessions concerning theory, may still remain theorists, and it frequently happens with such men that the large degree of confidence which they formerly entertained for sacred dogma, is merely transferred to new kinds of theory—with this result, however, in the tenure of their theories: that their confidence is less intense in the degree that their premises are held as less sacred. Men of this kind may profess to be governed by scientific modes of thought; they may set forth their theories in scientific terms—but this does not make them disciplined scientific scholars. The academical education which they acquire often only makes them more skilled theorists. It is not difficult to understand how such men may be beguiled by the ease with which all difficulties may be made to disappear under the exercise of an active and dominant imagination; nor is it difficult to see how easily they may become restive under the severer discipline which science requires, and how, therefore, unbiased inquiry is only slightly less possible to them than it is to the theologian. We may therefore expect to find, and do find, in this class exhibitions of the wildest flights of secular theory; with instances here and there, in which dialectics are skilfully employed to impart a specious gloss to superficial thinking. It is from this class that the modern Utopias spring, that the emotional and sympathetic economists come, who, turning with indifference from theology (which taught them that sickness and

mortality and all the inequalities of this life are to be compensated hereafter to believers in traditional dogma) have evolved from their own minds secular theories which furnish them supreme confidence in the belief that natural law is to be abrogated here, and that by some imaginary condition flowing from sympathy, universal equality is to be established. They picture to themselves the growth of wealth through the abolishment of poverty; the growth of industrial activity through some imaginary processes in which the incentives which produce activity are to be ignored. They dream of the freedom of contract as a freedom depending upon the absence of all sense of commercial obligation, and, in general, they make their sentiments stand for universal principles. They imagine a saturnian condition, in which the whole human race may become equal, not indeed, in capacity for producing, but in right for participating. Notwithstanding their indifference to theology, such thinkers often possess habits of mind which are true to theology in all save the old reverence. From the extremes of this class come the Nihilists, the Socialists, and the Anarchists, whose wild minds, no longer restrained by Church authority, resort to the utmost license in all their speculations. Some of these exhibit as much earnestness and devotedness as do the most intense of religious devotees—some of them have learned to face death in support of their vagaries with the calmness which characterized the early martyrs. Their intuitions have furnished them with what they feel to be unquestionable truth, and this confidence makes them

certain that all the world is wrong. Theory thus imparts to them a degree of self-sufficiency which enables them to resist every challenge of experience; but to science they illustrate that here, as in theology, individual devotion to theories cannot be a guarantee of the wisdom or to the truth of those theories.

Another class may be said to be composed of those who, by mental constitution, are inclined to mysticism. The leaders are usually men of education, more or less skilled in dialectic thought, who, having by the influence of surroundings surrendered a large part of their faith in the specific traditions and revelations of the old theology, employ their metaphysics in supporting a reverence for new forms of mysticism. The followers look for leaders, and find them among those who assume authority for metaphysical thought. Less capable of pursuing the intricacies of such thought, the followers accept the conclusions of their leaders. There is an esotericism pervading this class, and such cohesion as exists is largely due to this fact; for nothing beguiles men and women of mystical tendency more than the feeling that they are moved by thought incomprehensible to themselves and to others. Vagueness constitutes a chief charm. They come to believe that because their feelings are intense, the ideals to which these feelings point must be true. Definite creed founded upon such mysticism must, however, in the nature of things, be transitory. Their formulæ can never equal in permanency the old creeds, since these had for the imagination the impressiveness of age and the support of a great historic organization. The mystics

strive, therefore, with a forlorn hope, for although it may be possible to them, with the failure of their old traditions, to continue to believe in things which they cannot reconcile with their reason, it will not be possible for them to so formulate these into creeds as to secure for their new creeds any large acceptance from mankind, or make them anything other than the individual and transient mental possession of a few.

Another class consists of those who, having lost interest in theologies, not so much by investigation as by lazily falling into accord with the indifference of their associates, still regard it as a duty to support the existing status and to uphold the organizations of religion as instrumentalities which exert a restraint upon the masses—as a kind of police power. The theory is that existing organizations, although they have lost their vital faith, are all somehow necessary to the well-being, if not to the continuance, of social order. The truth or falsehood of the creed does not enter into their reasoning. The members of this class thus substantially hold that the faith which the educated can no longer entertain is nevertheless a necessity for the ignorant. Of course, apart from the concession which this involves,—that delusion can, under any circumstances, be necessary for progress—it imports an ignorance of the underlying causes which are moving the masses of men from faith to doubt, and an ignorance of the extent to which these masses have been moved. It ignores the fact that all men are equally concerned in knowing the truth; that deception can never be preferable to candor, and that delusion cannot be essential to permanent



well-being. Allied to these are also the place-holders of society, who, irrespective of any principle involved in intellectual progress, resist all movement because of their perfunctory and professional relation to what is—whether theologic, economic, or political.

Another class comprises the polemical sceptics who move aggressively upon theology. These are not actuated by a spirit of quiet examination, but usually become prominent by the degree of feeling which they employ in their methods. Between them and the wranglers of theology the contest is always characterized by some degree of acrimony; feeling invokes feeling; rancor stimulates rancor; the controlling motive of the polemical sceptic cannot be said to be constructive. One can never expect him to be an efficient coadjutor to science, since his work does not lead in the direction of either quiet persuasion or judicial examination. He is rather an expression of the more violent phases of a transitional condition.

Another class may be said to be comprised of the exegetical scholars and liberal theologians. The dissolving condition into which scientific modes of thought have brought the code of revelation as a whole, has imparted to this class an unusual activity, and there has been developed among them a great diversity of opinion, furnishing instances on the one hand in which modern knowledge has impelled the abandonment of almost all reliance upon revelation, and instances upon the other, in which the work of change is confined to the merest modification of the literal text of the revelation.

Still another class comprises those who desire in some manner to establish a psychological science. This class embraces two sets of constituents—those on the one hand who hope for a future confirmation by science of what they call *a priori* cognitions which, in the present state of knowledge, are not and cannot be confirmed by experience; and on the other hand those who seek to obtain from science the recognition of a basis for religious faith, independent of and superior to any scientific test whatever. The class, taken as a whole, manifests an effort to divide Nature into the natural and the supernatural, and in some mysterious manner to recognize a power which may be employed beyond the experiences and senses of man to dominate the understanding.

Finally, there is the class composed of the disciples of advanced science—those who insist that only by the complete disappearance of reverent feeling from the mind can the highest degree of knowledge attainable be reached. Just to the extent that the minds of the members of this class, under the discipline of science, have advanced beyond a state of superstition, beyond reverence for mysticism, they incline to recognize as theoretical all that they have not brought into accord with natural law, to use all theory as hypothesis, the value of which can only be determined by objective investigation. In their progress they therefore stop only where science stops, to advance when new facts are developed. Nothing that they know can be sacred to them, because they realize that knowledge is a function of natural law; and nothing that they

do not know can be sacred, because their discipline teaches them that the mind cannot justly be demanded to revere its own ignorance.

I have thus endeavored to indicate by classes some of the constituent elements composing the present phases in the movement of civilization as illustrative of the behavior of the two senses of certainty. Let us now glance at certain characteristics of these classes separately, and thereafter view the more general characteristics of the movement. In each, except the first and last—namely, the densely ignorant, and the disciples of science—it may easily be seen that there is a more or less active contest going on between conservatism and progress. Although each class, as it is influenced by surrounding circumstances, exhibits more or less reverence; nevertheless, there is in it as a class a contest between the different individuals of that class, arising from the different degrees of the sense of reverence which the members severally hold. In other words, there are elements within each class which make on the one hand for conservatism, and on the other for progress. The industrial class, for instance, progresses as a body, just as the consensus of the reverential feeling of the class becomes modified; but this sum of reverential feeling is the result of the contest within the class between the more and the less active minded, so that in this contest, whilst the degree of indifference increases with the accumulation of secular surroundings, and the reverent or conservative sense correspondingly diminishes, still the reverent or conservative sense, to the

degree in which it remains, operates as a retarding element.

A similar condition may be observed in the class not directly engaged in industry—consisting of the students of industry, or the theorists. The movement going on here exhibits a similar conflict. Among the more active minded individual constituents there has been a greater degree of substitution of less for more sacred theories, and thus these members are obviously more secular than their fellows. On the other hand, with those in whom the mental activity is less marked, less progress towards secularism is manifested. Whilst this class cannot be regarded as promoting the higher qualities of scientific knowledge, it nevertheless, as a class, moves steadily towards secularism.

In like manner it may be said of the class which I have designated as mystical, that the active elements import a lessening sense of sacredness in the new mysticisms, which it as a class is seeking to substitute for the old theology. It exhibits a movement from old theologic standards; it can never for itself command the degree of reverence for its mysticisms that was entertained in the old theology; on this account its tendency as a class is in the direction of secularism.

With the class designated as the polemical sceptics, the relation to immediate secularism is somewhat different: whilst it aims directly at theology, its force does not keep pace with its desire. Its constituents are too passionately bent upon immediate overthrow to be very efficient agents for that

gradual decline which lies in the processes of Nature. The disputatious spirit of polemical scepticism of itself provokes counter disputation, and so tends to limit the accomplishment of the sceptics' aims. Polemical scepticism cannot be thought of as consistent with quiet examination, nor as a force to allay the apprehensions of the theologically prepossessed; but whilst, for these reasons, it can never exert an influence upon theology equal to that exerted by those classes which exhibit less aggression in their behavior, the general tendency of such influence as it does exert is towards secularism.

The qualities of the sub-movement (or the movement within the bounds of class) may best be illustrated by a study of the behavior of the class comprising the exegetical scholars and liberal theologians. We shall discover the very genesis of exegetics in secular knowledge. When the critical student begins biblical study he has already lost some of the rigor of his old theology, through impressions which he has previously derived from geology, palæontology, anthropology, philology, astronomy, and, in a word, from all modern sciences. The impulsion of this knowledge prevents his reverent acceptance of the literal account of Genesis, and leads him to treat as allegory that which before was held by him as the sacred narration of literal fact. He is thus moved, at the beginning of his work, not by new light derived from heaven, but by new light derived from the stored knowledge of the world attained through non-reverent inquiry. As he proceeds in his examination, he experiences a progressive relaxa-

tion of his sense of reverence for some of the specific assurances of the old revelation. In this experience there inevitably arises within him a conflict between the sacred feelings which still possess him and his new doubts. Although inadequately realized by him, his mind is full of antitheses in which the supernatural and the natural, the mystical and the rational contend. The contest impels him as a theologian to invoke his spiritual sense for the preservation of his remaining reverence, against the inroads which his secular knowledge is constantly making upon that reverence. The spiritual sense thus invoked operates as a protective envelope, not, indeed, for the old faith already displaced, but for the vaguer faith which remains ; for the theologian, because he is a theologian, feels that there must continue within him some faculty which will allow him reverence for that which cannot be reached by examination. This phase of the exegetical scholar's mental movement, studied objectively by the scientific student, furnishes the reason for questioning the value of all sacred intuition as a means whereby a well-spring of absolute and supersensual truth can be maintained. Science accordingly interprets the course of exegetics as signifying the movement of the body of theology from point to point under the impulsion of secular knowledge, a movement which, as it progresses, leaves to the theologian less and less support for reverent prepossessions. Science views this movement as due to a mental law which is not mysterious, but perfectly natural, a law by the operation of which the theological mind is precluded

from realizing the corollaries of its own work, for, however astute and active that mind may be, it is under the blinding influence of sacred prepossession. Over every stage of the exegetical scholar's search hovers the reverent feeling which that scholar holds, and cannot help holding, as infallible, and because he so holds it, it limits his perception of the true corollaries of his work. It is his dilemma that he cannot infer the slightest fallibility for this reverent feeling, notwithstanding the fact that he is continually impelled in the progress of his search to reform its products. Could he but realize the antagonism between his sacred ideals and the secular quality of the influences which so irresistibly impel him, he would appreciate the inadequacy of exegetical study to strengthen theology—the futility of his efforts to confirm the assurance of ideals by the employment of means which inevitably contradict these ideals. Whilst, then, the exegetical scholar is pre-occupied in the pursuit of work in which, as line upon line of revelation fades under his examination, every step he takes renders him less capable of fortifying or explaining his remaining faith, and less capable of retracing the steps which he has taken, since it is impossible for him to re-exchange that which has become definite to him for that which has become indefinite, and yet preserve his mental and moral integrity.

In the view of science the exegetical scholar is therefore more of a result than a cause in the general movement, and he is of all men least capable of estimating his own place in that movement. So far

as he is a leader at all, it is only to those immediately about him, and thus he is a leader in the sub-movement; meanwhile, he is himself led by the influences acting upon him through his larger surroundings, in a direction just the opposite his intentions. Being a theologian, possessed therefore of the assumption of spiritual certainty, he can be moved from his place only as the force of secular knowledge becomes irresistible to him. Unconscious as the individual exegetical scholar is of the fact, there can be but little doubt from objective examination that the highest importance which the sum of exegetical work serves, consists in the influence which it exerts towards lessening the assurances of sacred faith and authority by a general moderation of the sense through which these assurances are held. Exegetics in this way becomes one of the solvents of theology. What emphasizes its importance as an agent in the general movement, is the fact that it operates upon theology from within, in a way that outside influences of themselves could not operate, and thus it serves to preserve some proximity of the body of theology to the general movement of modern thought. But in its direct relation to science, exegetics is not so important; it cannot greatly impress science, because it expresses a state of mind which lies behind the van of scientific thought. Exegetics must therefore continue to be affected more by progressive knowledge than it can ever affect this knowledge, and its course lies towards the dissipation of reverence, which accomplished, its office must become useless. It will be seen



therefore that the scientific value of exegesis is entirely different from that which the theologian places upon it. While with the theologian it seems to be the means of maintaining, through processes of adaptation, an indefinite continuance of theology, to the scientific scholar, studying it objectively, it appears to be only an agent by which a lessening degree of reverence is to be promoted in the general progress of thought towards secularism. Science, actuated as it is by objective investigation ; moving, as it does, from fact to larger fact in the acquisition of knowledge, values all agencies according to their efficiency in the promotion of this knowledge ; it can therefore view the contributions of the exegetical scholars only as provisional.

As with the exegetist, so with the liberal theologian : his accomplishments lag behind the larger accomplishments of science. Professing to accept the results of knowledge at their full value, his reverence renders such degree of acceptance impossible. Meanwhile, there is a constant discord between the corollaries of science and that sense of certainty by which he retains his remnant of theology. If we take the Unitarian as a representative of liberal theology, we may see how, estimating him in his relation to the whole movement, he stands at a point where his sense of certainty concerning supersensual things is in conflict with the sense of certainty derived from his knowledge and his surroundings : one holds him back ; the other pushes him forward. His lighter faith, contrasted with the heavier beliefs of the other theologians, simply

illustrates the larger degree of knowledge which he has attained, and at the same time the lesser degree of cohesion there is between this knowledge and his remaining faith. In many respects his place is less logical than is that of the Romanist, since, having abandoned the ceremonial and a part of the dialectics with which Rome captivates emotional natures, and having appealed from tradition to reason, he only partly makes good his appeal, and beguiles himself with the hope of maintaining a permanent place, in which reason is half encouraged and half suppressed. He ignores that mental law which determines that reason encouraged to the point of denying to the spiritual sense its support, will not and cannot cease its operation until that sense is dissipated. His position, therefore, is incongruous, because the employment of the reason to overthrow the assumptions of absoluteness does not allow compromise; and thus the Unitarian answers the demand neither of the feeling nor of the intellect. The influences of secular knowledge which have moved his mind have not been complete in his case; they have affected him only to a little greater degree than they have the other theologians; his secular sense of certainty has only a little more moderated his theological sense of certainty. But any one who will study the quality of the influences of secular knowledge must realize that these influences cannot cease in their progress any more with the liberal than they can with the narrow mind. They may be expected therefore to continue their irrepressible influence with constantly enlarging results.

Another fact developed by the consideration of the classes heretofore named, is that the self-estimate of the influence exerted by a given class is always apt to be exaggerated. Each member of every class magnifies the importance of the relations of his class to the world, and contrariwise, underrates the importance of the other classes. Each individual by the very act of allying himself to a given class manifests his confidence in its superiority. Adequately to estimate the place of these classes in the movement, therefore, it is necessary resolutely to turn from the estimate which the members of each class form, to an objective study of the influences exerted through the behavior of these classes upon each other. In order then to learn how the several classes act and react upon each other, and how they tend by their behavior to advance or retard the general movement, one must entertain an indifference to class feeling; he must be able to get outside of classes, as it were, and study impartially the forces moving among them, and moving them.

When in this way we examine the great force of acquired knowledge as it operates upon all these different classes, we find it is by its qualities that we can identify it with that force which caused the Reformation, which moved the minds of men from the rigors of the authority of Rome to the lesser rigors of the authority of Protestantism, which subsequently moved the Protestants into varieties of conclusions expressed in sects, and which gradually operated upon the minds of men generally, impelling them to still greater diversities of opinion; that, in

a word, it has all the qualities of a universal law, and as such is manifesting itself by signaling an irrepressible conflict between secular knowledge and sacred prepossessions, and is showing no tendency to cease its operation at any stage short of the final accomplishment of secularism.

By observing the movement of the classes named, from the outside, we may easily appreciate why it is that a class as a body does not move so rapidly as its individual leaders wish, nor so deliberately as its rear-guard desires; in other words, that there are two forces within each class, the progressive and the conservative, and wherever any forward movement of the class takes place such movement is the result of the preponderance of the progressive force.

Standing at a greater distance from this movement, we may discern how the classes are related as bodies towards each other and towards the whole movement. All that makes the difference between the narrow theologian and the liberal, between the exegetical scholar and him who unquestioningly accepts tradition, between the theological and the sceptical student, between the mystics of tradition and the mystics of new thought, is expressed by the degree in which the influence of knowledge has impressed the mind of each. So it is all that distinguishes the van from the rear of the movement is a scientific recognition of natural law in the van and a reverence for that which is assumed to be supernatural in the rear. Combining the specific influences as they are exerted upon the individual and the class, and still further combining them

as they are exerted upon all classes together, we may fully realize the issue between the progress of knowledge and the restraints of authority, between secularism and theology. In the preponderance of the inquiring and the decline of the reverent sense we may find the relation of the progress of knowledge to the decline of theology, the relation of the growing indifference toward theologic conception to the growing interest in the study of natural phenomena; we may perceive how the progress of knowledge is reinforced by every new acquisition, and conversely, how the theologic and ecclesiastical restraints are weakened by each loss of specific dogma. Standing thus at a distance, we may see, too, how it is that this progress, if slower than those in the van believe it to be, is more rapid than those in the rear conceive it; that the movement, when studied comprehensively, is affected upon the one hand by reason, and upon the other by the suppression of reason, and that the force which underlies these two elements is the influence of the secular things learned. Underneath the skill of verbal argument there is this great manifestation of impersonal nature that impels the recognition of natural law. The movement thus aggregated comprises a number of segregated forces; as an aggregated body it cannot be separated either by the eagerness of those in the van to suddenly overthrow the reverential sense, nor by the determination of those in the rear permanently to retain it; it proceeds with the deliberation of a great natural law. One moral corollary to be derived from this move-

ment is, that indifference to dogma is not a vice of the individual mind, but a characteristic of a natural law, which is justified as being one of the inseparable conditions of human progress. Nor can we fail to observe that the great general results of the conflict between the progressive and the conservative phases of certainty imply that the kind of mental certainties which belong to the progressive category have influenced the kind which belong to the conservative category, in a manner to justify the conclusion that knowledge is affecting theology to a far greater extent than theology is affecting knowledge; that the conservative sense has conferred no knowledge; that by its whole behavior it has restrained the mind from the acquisition of knowledge, and on the other hand that the progressive sense, by its behavior, has reached and gathered knowledge. In the contest between these two, the conservative sense has lost the cohesion of its assumptions, whilst the progressive sense has gained unity and cohesion of its findings. The ideal-forming faculty which characterizes the conservative sense, is that upon which theology has depended; and just as this sense has become subjected to the progressive sense, there has been a liberation of human thought.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE STANDARDS OF MORALS ACCOMPANYING THE TRANSITION FROM ECCLESIASTICISM TO SECULARISM.

**I** HAVE hitherto sought to deal with ethics by considering somewhat in detail the precepts of Jesus and the theologic theory of justice. I now propose to consider the progressive influence exerted by secularism upon the morals of mankind, more particularly during the last four centuries.

I shall, distinguishing scepticism from secularism, briefly notice the relation of each towards morals, as this relation has been exhibited from a period shortly before the Reformation to the present. I shall thereafter notice certain changes in moral standards which have taken place from one age to another in the progress of civilization, and shall seek to indicate the causes of these changes. I shall then examine certain modifications which have taken place in the minds of individual theologians in relation to the general authority of theology, particularly since the Reformation, and the relation of these modifications to individual moral and mental integrity.

By scepticism, as I here employ the term, I mean to designate that direct, aggressive, and hostile atti-

tude and action towards all theologic creed, which began actively to manifest itself shortly before the beginning of the Reformation. Treating it as a destructive influence, I distinguish it from schism, which I hold to be a reverent questioning, within the bounds of the Church, of sundry phases of dogma; and also from secularism, which I hold to be non-reverent inquiry, with constructive aims and results.

I have dated the beginning of this aggressive scepticism at a period shortly before the Reformation; for, although heretical thought was exerted in one degree or another throughout all the history of Christendom, it manifested itself almost entirely within the early Church, whilst this scepticism exerted itself outside, in direct attack upon all creeds as such. It is plain that when this aggressive scepticism, at war with the whole body of the creed of the Church, began, those immediately engaged in it could not have been moved by a definite purpose to construct a system of moral thought. In this respect they were totally unlike the schismatics, who, believing themselves to be agents from heaven for the purification of doctrine, were actuated by motives as directly moral as any that ever impelled orthodox believers; and when schism attained such magnitude that it became a comprehensive protest against papal authority, the success of the movement was due to the intensity of the moral purpose of the Protestant heretics.

This aggressive scepticism began to play an important part about the time of the first great astro-



nomical discoveries. These sceptics were rebels, not only against the theologic thought, but against all the customs, habits, and institutions born of this thought; and nothing was more natural than that the Church, the schismatics within the Church, and society at large should have joined in regarding them as the common enemies of man. Faith in the supersensual was prevalent; ecclesiastical authority was potent and rigid; all conduct was intimately associated with formulated creed and sacred precepts. Ecclesiasticism interfered with all men's walk and conversation. The differences between Protestantism and Romanism, radical as they were, did not prevent Protestant and Romanist from holding that the highest virtue of life involved obedience to *a* church authority and enthusiasm for *a* sacred creed. Any one who resisted obedience to *all* sacred authority, who refused acceptance of *all* sacred creed, was held by each equally as an agent of Satan; nor is it reasonable to suppose that the sceptics, thus environed, could have persuaded themselves of the entire innocence of their behavior. In becoming objects of hatred to those about them, they must have felt the untoward influence of this hatred upon their own natures; their determination developed defiance, and their defiance only intensified the hatred of all believers for them. Had it been possible in the sixteenth century for a secularist to have arisen, equipped with modern knowledge, actuated by a spirit of calm philosophy, moved by an interest to search truth for truth's sake, unaffected by hope of churchly reward or fear of

churchly threat, the people of the sixteenth century would have been presented with a miracle and a solecism. We can easily understand how little opportunity would have been afforded such an one either for acquiring an audience or for pursuing his work; the calmness with which he might have sought to convince the superstitious of the unreasonableness of superstition and of the impartiality of natural law, would have been interpreted as obdurate callousness; if he had told his hearers that they must divest themselves of sacred prepossession as the only means of directly obtaining knowledge, he would have seemed as one possessed of the Devil, asking them to throw away all that was worth living for—their soul's salvation.

Whatever virtues the early sceptics had were of the militant kind; their methods were characterized by defiance, caution, and furtiveness. Constituting a small minority, they were disturbers of the content which the established order of things was supposed to, and did to a great extent, confer. By the ecclesiastical organizations, Roman and Protestant, they were indiscriminately designated as deists, infidels, heretics, and miscreants; in return they hurled back epithets against the Church with like indiscrimination. In their eyes the priesthood consisted wholly of tricksters, hypocrites, and parasites, and the church organization itself appeared to them only as a malevolent and sinister tyranny; meanwhile they were hunted by the powers, avoided by the faithful, and oppressed by the realization of their own destructive work.

Now let us see how this early scepticism was affected by the progress of the Reformation. Nothing was further from the Reformers' thought or wishes, than that their reform should support or encourage scepticism ; nevertheless, just such support and encouragement it did afford. The Reformation was a great cleaving apart of unified reliance upon ecclesiastical authority ; it was manifested by a protest against the dominance of Church power, and in behalf of private judgment ; and this involved the decline, not only of Romish, but of all ecclesiastical power, for, in the rift thus made by ecclesiasticism within itself, inquiry into secular matters was afforded a first faint opportunity. As Gibbon says : " A spark of freedom was produced by this collision of adverse servitude."

In order to understand the logic of the progress of scepticism from such a beginning, we must examine the causes which have modified the hatred existing between it and ecclesiasticism. As inquiry advanced, stimulated by the fruits of antecedent inquiry, it continually bore new fruits ; it was under the influence of these fruits that men's minds were gradually opened to the persuasion of reason, and as gradually lost the inclination to accept the dictates of ecclesiastical authority. The fruits of inquiry consisted not only of the results of the higher discovery, but also of the results of invention and industry. As they became palpable, their logic became irrefutable ; they led minds to an appreciation of natural law and fact. It was thus that after the Reformation, for the first time in the history of

the world, there grew into power what may be called an Impersonal Tribunal, establishing its decisions through persuasion and illustration. It was impersonal, because it consisted of the product of inquiry and investigation; it exercised determinative and decisive functions, not coercively, but by inducing mental submission alike in the inquirer and in him who resisted inquiry. Its power was augmented by every new acquisition of knowledge. Wherever a definite issue between natural law and supernatural agency was presented to it, its decision was rendered in behalf of the potency of natural law, and against the assumptions of supernatural interference; and wherever the ecclesiastical power and the individual ecclesiastic unwillingly came within its influence, they were moved to modify in some degree the assurances of their reverent prepossessions, to submit to certain teachings of reason, and to relinquish certain authoritative declarations of dogma. The custodians of theology never directly sought to make this Tribunal an arbiter of the value of the authority which they assumed to derive from heaven; indeed their whole theory required their refusal to recognize any umpire in this world as capable of determining the value of their assumptions. Nor, indeed, can we suppose that the early sceptics, whatever their desires may have been, conceived of such a thing as an impersonal influence operating as an arbiter. All parties to the contest in its earlier stages were too saturated with rancor even to wish for any interposing influence to moderate the hostility which each entertained for the other. The Tribunal there-

fore did not owe its functions as an arbiter to any direct purpose of friend or foe. Under its disciplinary sway the sceptic by degrees lost his purely destructive bent and developed a constructive disposition. In this way scepticism slowly merged into secularism. That the larger import of all this was not foreseen, was for a long time but dimly realized, and has not yet won universal recognition, becomes apparent upon a careful retrospect of the movement. It is by looking backward and analyzing the historical factors, that we are enabled to understand how naturally and quietly scepticism suffered its metamorphosis. Indeed it was a condition of this metamorphosis that it should be unperceived by those in whom it occurred.

We must always bear in mind the very limited field in which the earlier sceptic of necessity worked, and the very extended field in which the modern secularist is engaged. Between the two the Impersonal Tribunal has grown and strengthened with every addition to the world's accumulation of secular knowledge, and by such growth affords the most ample guarantee for its future predominance—a guarantee based on the ever-increasing number of minds stimulated to spontaneous thinking. The modern secular student, himself the fullest product of this influence, realizes its potency as a subduer of that wrangling spirit which, whilst it dominated men's minds, prevented inquiry and obstructed knowledge; he realizes also on analyzing the moral factors involved, that the growth of the power of the Impersonal Tribunal

rests upon such a basis of intellectual and moral integrity as theology never had or can have. Looking around him at the present and contrasting it with the past, the student finds the influence of secularism upon ecclesiasticism manifested not only in the manner in which it disturbs specific parts of creeds, but in the way it has modified and is modifying the tone of the ecclesiastic spirit generally. Anathemas are no longer hurled as of old<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> Although the Church now seldom, by any of its various sects, issues the official anathema against knowledge, not a few individual theologians of all sects still continue its use. There are, however, no efforts to discriminate the epithets "atheist," "infidel," and "heretic"; they are generally used as interchangeable, and meant to define any kind of disbelief, and their particular significance must be inferred from their application. Thus they can have no practical significance if aimed at an assumed denial of the existence of an Ultimate Power greater than man, because such a denial is never made; pagan, fire-worshipper, sceptic, and Christian alike recognize the existence of such a Power, and differ only in their efforts to delineate that Power. When, then, we consider the multitudinous views of God which theology offers through its various sects, it must be obvious that there are few men living who do not differ more or less in their acceptance or rejection of some of these theologic delineations. Every sect may therefore appropriately be charged by every other sect with atheism, infidelity, or heresy; a Unitarian may be called an atheist by a Trinitarian, and a Trinitarian by a Unitarian; a Romanist may be called a heretic by a Protestant, and a Protestant by a Romanist; a Calvinist may point to a disciple of free agency as an infidel, and a disciple of free agency may point to a Calvinist as an atheist. Indeed, every individual within each sect, differing from another within that sect, may similarly point to such other either as an atheist, an infidel, or a heretic.

Science posits a Power beyond what is known of Nature, but inscrutable beyond such inferences as may be drawn from the manifestations of Nature. Theology likewise posits a Power beyond what is known of Nature, and calls this Power God. Whilst it admits that

excommunication has declined in importance, until it has become a mere *brutum fulmen*. Secular inquiry no longer suggests the machinations of a personal devil except when it comes very close to the revered preconceptions of the individual; to the average man, it has ceased to appear even eccentric, and in instances it has actually found its way into the very heart of ecclesiasticism, without incurring the charge of immorality. Meanwhile,

He is inscrutable, it nevertheless assumes to delineate His attributes by some other means than inferences drawn from His manifestations in Nature; and in essaying through its various sects to do this, it delineates attributes totally inconsistent with each other and with all that we can learn from the objective study of the actual manifestations of natural law.

As secular knowledge advances, the epithets employed by the individual theologian prove to be insufficient for purposes of definition, and complete only in the qualities of imprecation. To the view of liberal thinkers, the employment of such epithets serves only to exhibit the narrowness, bigotry, and intolerance of him who employs them; but it also possesses a much broader significance which involves all theology. The narrow individual theologian is not an accident, but an entirely natural and logical product of a System, the fundamental basis of which is the assumption of the supremacy of a sacred sense over all reason and all knowledge. This System has taken the theologian in his infancy, surrounded him like an atmosphere, and impressed him with the conviction that the highest truth he can entertain depends upon his reverence for certain dogma with which the System furnishes him. Now, if the System is right, he, as a legitimate product of that System, is also right. We cannot deprecate the narrow theologian's individual sincerity, because we must all recognize that sincerity is, as such, an unassailable virtue. If his sincerity leads him to the recognition of superstition, there is no other course in deprecating his superstition than to challenge the System from which that superstition has been received; and the only means by which this is done is through appeal to secular knowledge.

without the bounds of theology, there is a rapidly increasing number of scholars who, appreciating the futility of all efforts to set up one faith against another, are seeking to test all faith in the supersensual by knowledge. They pursue their inquiries without fear of ecclesiastical authority ; and even within the body of the Church, where intelligence prevails, they are sometimes recognized as patient and earnest students, who, although they may seem deluded, are honest.

I have thus touched upon the movement of morals as it is related to the sceptic and his successor the secularist. I will now briefly look at the moral standards of mankind as exhibited at different periods of time, in order to note how the changes in these standards are related to ecclesiasticism and how to secularism.

In contrasting the human behavior and the standards for human behavior in a primitive era with those of a more advanced civilization, the student is struck with the immense difference between the two. As Mr. Spencer has pointed out, "tenderness for the weak and sympathy with the suffering, characteristics of a developed and enlightened age, are not only not experienced by savage peoples, but appear to them absurd and incomprehensible." The difference thus exhibited in degrees of sympathy is likewise shown in every impulse and expression of the human mind. It is the history of all human development that each step of the movement from savagery to barbarism, from barbarism to civilization, and from one stage of civilization to another, is



marked by special mental and moral characteristics, expressing the result of progress; each step is distinguished by a standard of morals peculiarly its own; each new standard grows out of the necessity for new adaptation, and through this necessity displaces its predecessor.

The moral standards which I desire particularly to contrast are those of the period in which the highest degree of ecclesiasticism prevailed and those of the present day, in which secularism has in part supplanted ecclesiasticism. In Christendom, until the seventeenth century, that degree of individual intellectual freedom which all modern moralists agree in pronouncing to be necessary for legitimate inquiry, was branded by the dominant powers as the chief vice of the age; and the power which especially so branded it was the Church. In the assumed exercise of its divine wisdom, the Church, abjuring inquiry, held it to be the highest intellectual and moral virtue of man to yield unquestioning credulity to its dictates. Nothing can be plainer than that whenever a highly organized power, itself the growth of antecedent conditions, becomes dominant in a nation, it imparts a special cast to the national character, tastes, and dispositions; and to the extent that it places ideals above reality and secures reverence for these ideals, its tendency is to invert the normal conditions of mental and moral development. Moreover, nothing is plainer to the moralist of to-day, in surveying the past, than that when the Church assumed to dictate truth as an absolute thing on the ground that it could be determined

only by ecclesiastical authority, and when it inculcated uncompromising partisanship and called to the support of its assumptions the militancy of the period, it promoted to the extent of its power conditions which were totally inconsistent with any effort to reach relative truth by patient and unbiased investigation.

The theologic method of accounting for the existence of different standards at different periods is in entire conflict with the method derived from historical and secular study. The theologic theory always involves the presupposition of supernatural powers, benign and malevolent, which mysteriously operate in contest with each other upon the fallen nature of man. I know of no means of testing this theory other than by the historical study of the actual behavior of men and bodies of men possessed of it, and by the careful drawing of inferences from the consequences of their behavior. That theology should resist such investigations as being beyond the domain of science is natural, because they convict it of incapacity to interpret consistently the attributes of that Ultimate Power which all recognize as lying behind phenomena; because, too, they exhibit an immoral influence hidden in the assumptions of Church authority. Agree as we may with the theologian that there is a Supreme Power behind all visible phenomena, there remains the profoundest moral reason for insisting that any interpretation of that Power shall recognize the right of the individual to his integrity; that to preserve this he must be allowed to examine the manifestations of Nature

and be granted the moral right to accept simple and natural explanations of those manifestations if they impress him as self-consistent ; and that he must be allowed to reject supernatural explanations if they impress his mind as being self-contradictory and incoherent. In other words, the individual must be relieved of any demand upon him, to bow submissively to any theory regarding the supersensual that he cannot believe.

Taking a perspective view of the past, the modern student of morals observes how the ecclesiastical and militant powers joined in dividing mankind into two distinct classes, one consisting of the few who should wield arbitrarily the authority of State and Church, and the other of the great mass who should bow in unquestioning submission. He observes how non-mysterious it is that intellectual activity, free inquiry, and the individuality of the masses were under these conditions impossible, and why that degree of inquiry inherent in industrialism and secularism could not have been acquired ; he sees how mankind gradually emerged from under ecclesiastical and militant sway through the influence of the fruits of forbidden inquiry ; how coincident this movement was with the growth of industrialism and secularism, and how this growth caused a gradual decline of idealism and abstract contemplation and of the ecclesiastical and militant forces which supported this idealism and abstract contemplation. He sees how, out of this transition, first scepticism and then secularism slowly developed, the latter carrying with it new means for

gauging virtue in thought and behavior, by linking act and intention together; how the State slowly became separated from the Church and from the visionary aims of theology; how the sense of inquiry slowly grew, until it came to determine the value of morals by test and experience and application, and thus how the whole standard of morals underwent a change for the better.

If the modern theologian fails to appreciate the relation of morals to secularism, or the causes which produced the change we have noted, it is because he cannot dispassionately study the historical factors as they actually behave in the movement. When, therefore, we hear modern thought stigmatized from the pulpit as destructive of all that is worth having; when we find many of the clergy looking about them in dismay, and proclaiming discord and anarchy as the necessary result of the decay of the old faith in supersensual things; when we hear them vainly calling "halt!" to a movement which they are impotent to withstand, and denouncing those who are actively engaged in this movement as mockers actuated by a rash spirit of negation; when we hear them charging the age with a loss of faith in virtue, we may realize how untrue their picture is, and to what extent the vagaries of their spiritual sense are responsible for the untruth. It is from a superior elevation that the moralist of to-day is enabled to appreciate the eternal, constant, and natural law which decrees that ignorance must accompany the repression of inquiry, and that such truth as we are capable of knowing cannot be learned through

our sense of reverence for authority, but only through determined and dispassionate inquiry; that the whole movement from the era of ecclesiasticism to the present, so far from being vicious, is a moral protest against the darkening influence of all sacred ideals upon the human understanding.

Now let us take a brief historical retrospect, in order to point out more precisely the relation which the modern Protestant theologian holds toward this progress of morals. At some time between the conversion of Constantine and the Reformation, ecclesiastical authority reached its climax. Rome was then the unchallenged custodian of the faith of western civilization ; its authority was exerted over every avenue of education ; it taught childhood an explicit creed, and enjoined reverence for it as sacred ; it anathematized all that conflicted with its interpretations, and thus impressed the age with the idea that everything valuable in life depended upon unquestioning submission to this interpretation ; it suppressed everything secular that could by any possibility interfere with unqualified submission. Every intelligent Protestant of to-day will accept this historical statement as fact, and will agree that the Romish Church of to-day, when it claims that it has promoted civilization, merely confounds the *post hoc* with the *propter hoc*. The Protestant will agree that Romanism exerted an influence against the progress of knowledge, and also against the progress of morals ; and in confirmation of this he will point to the fact that morals and knowledge have developed since the Reformation more than at any time during

the dominance of Romanism. He will attribute this growth to the Protestant Church ; but in so doing, I think it may be shown that he, too, but confounds the *post hoc* with the *propter hoc*, only in a less degree than does his Romish brother. For, when we examine ecclesiasticism, we find it a great homogeneous System of thought and action, exhibiting constant resistance to free inquiry ; that the Protestant theologian is but a modified expression of this System ; that the failure of Protestantism to exert so obstructive an influence as Romanism is due, not to any radical difference of disposition, but to the limitation of ecclesiastical power which has resulted from internecine theologic warfare. This warfare had its origin in inquiry, which, despite the wish or intention of any of the contestants, has made its way and garnered its fruits. The growth of inquiry within the theologic body began with the exercise of the right of private judgment—the application of a moral principle which Protestantism insisted on, but sought to restrict to itself. Protestantism's reduced effectiveness, therefore, is due to the growth of this inquiry within its own domain, and the consequent generation of a multitude of conflicting sects, no one of which is in position to forbid the exercise of private judgment to the others. Thus we see that the largest significance of the Reformation is misinterpreted quite as much by the Protestant as by the Romanist. Whilst the Romanist regarded the Reformation as a great rebellion against the unity of sacred creed, the Protestant regarded it as a moral force for eliminating the errors of Rome

through the exercise of private judgment by a sect. To the secular student, it was simply a contest between ecclesiastical powers, giving secular inquiry its first fruition. The steps through which the Sacred System of thought has been moved may be stated thus: Before the Reformation it was recognized as embracing ecclesiasticism, theology, and religion; after the Reformation the Protestant sought to distinguish ecclesiasticism from theology, condemning the former and supporting the latter; under the further impulsions of knowledge, some of the more liberal votaries of the Sacred System attempt to make a distinction again between theology and religion, condemning theology as a mere vehicle of doctrine and formulated creed, and fancying that in religion they have a force which renders doctrine and creed secondary if not unimportant. But all lines thus drawn are artificial; the Sacred System, in its lighter as in its heavier phases alike, demands reverence for authority, and all efforts to divide it with a view of eliminating its objectionable qualities are futile. Its vice can disappear only with the decay of the System—by the candid recognition that a demand upon any individual to entertain a feeling of reverence for any declaration that his reason does not approve concerning the supersensual, is not a moral demand.

The largest, the unintended, and the unperceived consequences of the Reformation, then, consist in the warrant it gave to secular inquiry, the immense results of which render it impossible for the world of thought ever to return to any greater respect than it

now has for the Sacred System. It is these indirect and far-reaching consequences of the initial cause of Protestantism that the Protestant Church especially seeks to obscure ; but they are confirmed by a study of history, especially that of the past fifty years ; moreover, they manifest themselves in the movement of the individual theologic mind in conflict with the general system of theologic authority, as we shall presently see.<sup>1</sup>

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, I shall proceed to examine certain modifications which have taken place in theology, and which may be called the natural evolution of its insufficiency to support a dogma through revelation and by organized authority.

<sup>1</sup> In view of the silent but effective erosion of all creed that is thus going on, the dread of Rome's final conquest of the world, which one hears professed from Protestant pulpits, seems like a nightmare of the reverent Protestant mind ; it certainly does not affect the student of historical cause and effect, whose objective study of all the factors reveals to him a power in the silent progress of knowledge that cannot be overcome.

One who confines his attention to the numerical and physical growth of the Roman Catholic Church in America, fails to appreciate the general character of the forces that are at work. The influences which have accomplished a modification of Romanism are not of a kind suddenly to lose their potency ; they are rather of a kind which work progressively upon all sacred creed. The ignorant part of the Church can never crowd the more enlightened part to the rear of civilization by mere force of numbers. The individual, acquiring knowledge and intelligence, will never bow in unquestioning submission to a power which suppresses knowledge.

But the Protestants can take little solace from this, for the influences which moderate Romanism are precisely the same as those which move with greater force upon Protestantism ; they are antagonistic to the whole System of sacred thought.



Now let us look at the direction which the individual theologic mind takes, as it is borne from definiteness to vagueness. Partly from the necessity of adapting his faith to modern knowledge, as this knowledge influences him, and partly from the necessity of adapting organized creed to the intelligence of his hearers, the liberal preacher exhibits the growing influence of secular thought upon theology. Although the duties of his profession make it necessary for him to limit, as far as possible, the influence of modern thought upon creed, he is irresistibly impelled to doubt some of the specific declarations of creed. Modern knowledge continually appeals to his intellectual honesty, and thus presses him towards vagueness touching faith, as the only means by which he can hold a lesser faith in dogma ; but this knowledge because it is progressive, affords him no stopping place.

Individuality and consequent variety among the more advanced theologians, arising from these causes, furnish the reason for every modern trial for heresy. The degree to which knowledge reaches the mind of the theologian marks the difference between the liberal theologian and the illiberal formalist, between enlightenment and ignorance, between breadth and narrowness ; the progressive influence of this knowledge coincides with the progressive decay of ecclesiastical authority upon points of doctrine and specific creed. In every church organization, the tendency of this influence, upon the active-minded theologian, makes him rely less and less upon the formula of tradition, and as his reliance declines, a sense of

aspiration becomes the generator and support of his religious ideals. As the vision of the Apocalypse, with its definite description, falls out of accord with modern knowledge, the theologian impressed by the influence of this knowledge reluctantly turns from the condemnation of him who wrote the Apocalyptic vision and who said, "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Thenceforth he is irresistibly impelled to rely for his faith on an indefinite vision developed by his sense of longing—and to hold this vision as expressing "the likeliest God within the soul." From specific instances of loss of faith in dogma under the irrepressible force of palpable fact, he is impelled to entertain a less reliance upon the demands of Church organization, and to look vaguely beyond the organization for his faith. The consequence of the modification of his reverence for items of specific tradition and for the rigor of Church authority, is largely unperceived by him in whose mind it takes place; but however unperceived and however unwished for, it is inevitable. It is unperceived because he cannot objectively study the precise character of the factors which cause the transition; because he cannot appreciate the quality of the surrounding influences working upon him; because he cannot perceive how they impel him as he turns from Church authority, to betake himself to vagueness. With all his progress in this vague direction, he is yet enabled to fancy to himself that the

vagueness which he has exchanged for definiteness, is really more definite than the definiteness which he has abandoned. Plainly as he can see how those about him, who have been less influenced by modern knowledge than he, beat the air in their efforts to resist the influence of knowledge; plainly as he appreciates the delusion by which they confound their aspirations with wisdom higher than knowledge, he himself can never for a moment conceive it possible that his own sense of reverent longing can make him incapable of accepting those larger corollaries of knowledge which are opened to the secular mind. His aspirations are so personal and so transcendent that they exalt the fancy within him, that the particular set of ideals for which he longs, express final and unassailable truth, superior to all reason. A theologic mind thus subjected resists under a sense of duty, so far as it possibly can and so long as it can, all influences of knowledge which tend to disturb its illusion. It is one of the tricks of the imagination to impart the appearance of the clearest outline to the vaguest fancies, and the illusion becomes all the greater with him who holds the products of his imagination as sacred. No effort at reason or dissuasion can make him appreciate the tenuity of his dreams.

But although longing regarding the supersensual thus has the aspect, to him who entertains it, of sacred inspiration, nevertheless, as its products are different in different minds, by the very variety which different minds contribute to general thought, it becomes an agent for the slow dissolution of sacred

creed, tradition and revelation. In the intense tenacity with which each separate individual theologian holds the objects of his sacred longing there is an impersonal influence which operates toward the decay of Church authority.

When we turn from the individual idealist's estimate of the power and quality of his longing to find that the kind of aspiration which affects him is the same kind as that which affects others equally intent, and when we note the marked varieties which are exhibited in the products of individual longings, we can realize how, objectively studied, longing not only fails in its power to verify formulated creed, but how it contains within itself a force which tends progressively to weaken reliance upon creed, and to weaken the influence of organization which dictates creed, and how it thus gradually tends to move mankind from reverence to secularism. If longing did indeed determine the verity of its object, it would produce unity and not disunity. We should not then have the conflict which exists between the aspirations of the disciple of Mahometanism, and Buddhism, and Christianity. If longing did indeed certify absolute truth, we should not have wisdom from on high in conflict with knowledge.

There are thousands of individual theologians to-day who, whilst they resist the demand which their church makes upon them for implicit belief in its specific creedal utterances, nevertheless cling vaguely to the Church organization. Whilst they feel in their hearts the impropriety of the exaction by the Church of a literal belief in its specified

declarations of creed ; whilst they feel that they can no longer accord implicit faith to its precise articles of faith, they still entertain a vague hope that the organization may in some manner be freed of the rigor by which it demands acceptance of a specific creed, which they as individuals feel no longer to be virtuous.

How does this mental behavior affect unity of faith? Each one of these theologians following his longings hopes that the organization will adapt itself to the ideal which he as an individual holds regarding faith. Meanwhile not one of them can formulate in words any basis upon which his hope can have a fruition, because his formulation, were it definite, would be no more likely to command universal acquiescence than would any other definite formulation ; and were it indefinite, to the extent of such indefiniteness, it would have no value as objective creed. There is, however, one realization common to them all, and this involves the question of moral and mental integrity : each one of them realizes as thoroughly as man can (in the very fact of his refusal to accord to the specific and narrow declaration of the organized creed of his church), that there is something unjust in the demand made by his church upon him, to profess implicit acceptance of its specific declarations, for the reason that the demand involves the violation of his self-honesty ; but so personal is the sacred sense that he who is thoroughly possessed of it utterly fails to apply the principle under which he refuses acceptance, to any other than himself ; he fails to realize that it is not

only to him that a demand which requires the profession of dogma inconsistent with individual conviction is immoral, but that such a demand is immoral whenever and wherever made. Whenever he shall be enabled to realize this, he will also realize that however important to a church it may be to sustain theology and theologic authority, it is more important for the progress of morals in the world, that the individual should not be required by any assumption of sacredness to violate his mental integrity ; and when this is realized the application of the principle will involve the recognition of the fact that sacred authority should not exist.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RELIGIOUS CONSOLATION.

**R**ELIGIOUS consolation may be said to be a feeling of gratification derived from the contemplation of sacred ideals. A set religious creed, indoctrinated in childhood, according to the theologic theory, not only furnishes consolation, but by such consolation supports conviction of its truth. Consolation thus becomes one of the guards for the preservation of creed; it helps to impel him who feels it to resist every direct attack upon his faith and every effort at dissuasion. In order to estimate the real value of such an influence as a certifier of truth, we must disregard the exaggerated estimate which its possessor instinctively places upon it, and make a calm objective study of its historical behavior, choosing as the particular object for our study one which is as remote as possible from our immediate sympathies and antipathies. We shall need an ancient system of theology, in whose definite objects of worship we do not in the least believe and with whose delineations of divinity we have not the least sympathy, but at the same time one which furnishes data from which we may rationally infer the whole relation of its votaries and

the kind of influence which was exerted upon these votaries—especially the consolation which it afforded them and the effect of this consolation in impressing them with a feeling of certainty concerning the objects of their faith. Happily, such a system is set before us by the archæologists, especially in the theology of Egypt; I say especially in the theology of Egypt because this particular theology, with the possible exception of the Hebrew, exceeds all others in the degree to which its consolations imparted to its devotees a sense of truth for the objects of their faith; in none of the others was the element of intense personal emotion so manifested. But the modern Christian theological student, influenced as he is by his own theology, is impelled, in the study of even so remote a religion as that of Egypt, to value his research mainly as a means of supporting the biblical stories of the Hebrews under Egyptian rule, and especially of the account furnished by the Exodus. Beyond this it has little or no importance to him except perhaps as it may enable him to contrast the grosser symbolisms of Egyptian worship with the less gross which belong to the Hebrew worship. It is on account of this reverent prepossession that archæologic research in Egypt has so failed to impress the theologically inclined archæologists with the scientific purpose and import of archæology, viz.: the discovery of fact.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever purpose archæological study of the

<sup>1</sup> Nothing can be more unsatisfactory from an historical point of view than the meagre results of the efforts of the theologians to confirm by archæological data the details of the Exodus, and nothing



strictly theological kind may have for theologians—and I know of none more important to them than that by which they assume it as being a support for

can at the same time better illustrate the influence of reverent prepossessions.

Brugsch-Bey prefaces his essay on *The Exodus and the Monuments* by assuring his readers that "those who are afraid of meeting in these new hypotheses attacks upon the statements of Holy Scripture—from which may God preserve me—or the suggestion of doubts relative to the sacred history, may feel completely reassured. Far from lessening the authority and the weight of the Books on which our religion is founded, the results at which the author of this Memoir has arrived—thanks to the authentic indications of the monuments—will serve, on the contrary, as testimonies to establish the supreme veracity of the Sacred Scriptures, and to prove the antiquity of their origin and of their sources." (*Egypt under the Pharaohs*, vol. ii., p. 332, London, 1879.) He then assumes to determine the exact time and the exact course of the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt, by an analysis of the indications from the monuments and from the papyri. He employs a translation from a papyrus in the British Museum in which an Egyptian royal scribe reports a journey from the royal palace of Ramses in pursuit of two domestics who are flying from bondage.

In order to fit this narrative to his theory, Brugsch-Bey heroically substituted for the mention of the two domestics the names of Moses and the Hebrews, and for the mention of the royal scribe, the name of Pharaoh, who is described in Exodus as following Moses and the Hebrews in their flight. (*Id.*, p. 359.) But as his account of the route taken by the Hebrews depends upon his assumed discovery of the site of the ancient city of Pithom, his whole theory fell to the ground and had to be abandoned upon the subsequent discovery of the real site of Pithom by M. Naville. (See *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, revised by M. Brodrick, London, 1891, p. 7. See also, *Steinschrift und Bibelwort*, von Heinrich Brugsch, Berlin, 1891.)

Reginald Stuart Poole of the British Museum, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under the title "Egypt," gives as a "cardinal piece of evidence" the mention of the 'Aperiu, or 'Apuriu (words resembling in sound that of the word Hebrew) as engaged in public works under

biblical revelation—it is worse than valueless, to one who would know the influence of Egyptian

Ramses II., and as therefore identifying the Hebrews in Egypt under Ramses II. and later kings, but not after the twentieth dynasty. He gives Brugsch-Bey as his authority for this; but if Brugsch-Bey—who, as we have seen, cannot be charged with any wish to disregard favorable evidences in support of the Bible—ever held such a view, he must afterward have been impelled to change it, since he explicitly says: "Some scholars have recently sought to recognize in the Hebrews the so-called Aper, Apura, or Aperiu, the Erythræan people in the East of the nome of Heliopolis, in what is known as the 'red country' or the 'red mountain'; and hence they have drawn conclusions which rest on a weak foundation. According to the inscriptions, the name of this people appears in connection with the breeding of horses and the art of horsemanship. In an historical narrative of the time of Tehuti-mes III. the Apura are named as horsemen or knights (*senen*), who mount their horses at the king's command. In another document of the time of Ramses III., long after the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, 2,083, Aperiu are introduced, as settlers in Heliopolis, with the words, 'Knights, sons of the kings and noble lords (Marina) of the Aper, settled people, who dwell in this place.' Under Ramses IV. we again meet with 'Aper, 800 in number,' as inhabitants of foreign origin in the district of Ani or Aini, on the western shore of the Red Sea, in the neighborhood of the modern Suez. These and similar data completely exclude all thought of the Hebrews." (*Egypt under the Pharaohs*, revised, London, 1891, pp. 318, 319.)

One is led to infer that the Exodus of the Hebrews could not possibly have been so important an event to the Egyptians as the writer of the Exodus seeks to make it. The reign of Ramses II. and that of his successor Menephtah I. (in which the Exodus is assumed to have occurred) are more fully accounted for by monumental and hieroglyphic inscriptions than any other reigns of Egypt, and yet they give no evidence of any of the details set forth in Exodus. The name of Moses has not even been identified, nor can it be legitimately inferred, from any monumental inscriptions or from any papyrus; nor is there any agreement among scholars as to any designation by name of the Hebrews on the monuments.

theology upon the life and behavior of the Egyptian believer. This is so not simply because the results of the efforts of the modern theologian to make the inscriptions on the monuments and papyri of Egypt support his theology, are vague and barren, but because reverence tends to incapacitate the mind from drawing those logical and natural conclusions which may otherwise be drawn. If we can then drop all effort to seek in archæology a support for any particular theology upon which modern religion depends, and resolutely direct our attention to studying the character of the ancient Egyptian worship itself, with a view of learning what influence it exerted upon the Egyptian worshipper and the Egyptian nation; how far its ritual and its creed afforded consolation to the Egyptian devotee, and how far this consolation in turn tended to produce a conviction in the mind of the devotee that his creed and ritual were true, we can learn all there is to be learned of the quality and character of Egyptian worship, and we can reach the most logical conclusions possible under the circumstances to be reached, as to the value or the valuelessness of consolation as a certifier of the Egyptian creeds.

In Egypt, research has brought to light almost innumerable papyri, mural inscriptions and monuments, all indicating the emotional character of the Egyptian theology. Despite the intricacies of the ritual and the confusion arising from the names of the gods, every papyrus bears witness to the intense devoutness of the Egyptians, implies the high degree of consolation which they derived therefrom,

and the deep sense of certainty which this consolation imparted to their minds regarding their creed. The magnificent temples of Egypt, and the elaborate and sensuous rites indicated by these temples, were but the means for impressing upon the votaries as deep a sense of awe as was ever impressed upon a Christian worshipper by "the dim religious light" and the solemn rites employed in the middle ages. "Love and terror laid the tiles" of the shrines of ancient Egypt precisely as they did those of mediæval Christendom. The cities of Egypt and their palaces, by all that we can infer of them, were built only for time; they have not outlived decay; but the massiveness of the architecture of the places of worship, and the elaborateness of their construction, impel the conclusion that the Egyptians intended these to last forever.<sup>1</sup>

One need not entertain the least degree of reverence for the objects of Egyptian worship—indeed, the less the better—to be enabled to appreciate from the hieroglyphics on the monuments and on the papyri that earnestness and devoutness were characteristic of rulers and people alike, that together in their distress they implored their gods for help; that

<sup>1</sup> All the ancient monuments of Egypt have perished except some which were necessarily of a religious nature—the temples and the tombs. The palaces of kings and nobles have utterly disappeared. Our knowledge of Egyptian civil architecture is derived from paintings in the tombs. Many texts of historical interest have been preserved, but their original intention was not historical, but religious. For us the royal texts of Karnak, Abydos, and Saqâra are of historical value, but they have a purely religious meaning on the walls where they were found.—*Religion of Ancient Egypt*, P. Le-Page Renouf (Hibbert Lectures), New York, 1879, p. 28.

in what they held to be the answer of these gods to their petitions they found consolation, and that this consolation supported a firm assurance of the truth of their mystical creeds. Each additional papyrus that comes to light but confirms the conclusion that to the Egyptian imagination the good divinities hovered over every one born into the world, guarded him from injury throughout life, protected him from the influence of evil spirits, and in the hour of death afforded to the survivors the profoundest solaces for their loss. Many of the papyri taken from the bodies of mummies contain words as solemn as any derived from any theology. It was the custom to bury with the dead, parts of the *Book of the Glorifying Osiris* which were employed at the funeral services, and nothing can be more impressive than some of the words in this book. The Invocations in the Ritual were addressed to Osiris; the deceased over whom the words were spoken was regarded as personifying this god, and thus becoming identified with him as the cause of all things. One part of this ritual reads thus: "Gods and men raise their hands in search of thee as a son seeketh his mother. Come to them whose hearts are sick. Grant to them to come forth in gladness, and the bands of Horus may exult and the abodes of Set may fall down in fear of them." Horus as here used signifies Light, or the sun in his full strength, and Set signifies Darkness or the powers of Darkness.

Intimately associated with the sense of certainty which the Egyptian entertained for his creed were the teachings of moral conduct. As Renouf says:

"The triumph of Right over Wrong, of Right in speech and in action—for the same word signified both Truth and Justice,—is the burden of nine-tenths of the Egyptian texts which have come down to us. Right is represented as a goddess ruling as mistress over heaven and earth, and the world beyond the grave; the gods were said to live by it."<sup>1</sup> As M. Chabas says: "None of the Christian virtues is forgotten in it; piety, charity, gentleness, self-command in word and action, chastity, the protection of the weak, benevolence toward the humble, deference to superiors, respect for property in its minutest details . . . all is expressed there, and in extremely good language."<sup>2</sup> If the efforts of the Egyptians to practise their ideals of conduct varied at different periods of their history, as the historical account gives every evidence that they did, the variation was probably no greater than that which has characterized the efforts of Christians at different periods of time to practise the precepts of Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> The *Book of the Dead* of the Egyptians, by far the most important of the sacred writings, provides in one of the rubrics that, if certain portions of it are recited over the dead, it will enable his spirit to come forth over the earth every day as he pleases, to enter his house and return again to his body as he pleases. But far more significant is the Moral Code contained in this writing. "No one could pass to the blissful dwellings of the dead who had failed at the judgment passed in the presence of Osiris. No portion of the *Book of the Dead* is so generally known as the picture which represents the deceased person standing in the presence of the goddess Maât, who is distinguished by the ostrich-feather upon her head; she holds a sceptre in one hand and the symbol of life in the other. The man's

I have referred particularly to the Egyptian religion, partly because modern researches in Egypt have received more general attention from the popular reader than those made in the case of any other ancient nations; but mainly because, as I have said, Egypt was one of the most religious, if not the most religious, of the nations of antiquity. Indeed, we are told by an eminent Egyptologist that if we would keep clear of religion in studying Egyptian

heart, which represents his entire moral nature, is being weighed in the balance in the presence of Osiris seated upon his throne as judge of the dead. The second scale contains the image of Maât. Horus is watching the indicator of the balance, and Tehuti, the god of letters, is writing down the result. Forty-two divinities are represented in a line above the balance. These gods correspond to the number of sins which it is their office to punish. It is with reference to these sins and the virtues to which they are opposed that the examination of the deceased chiefly consists.

“The hundred and twenty-fifth chapter is entitled ‘Book of Entering into the Hall of the Two-fold Maât’; ‘the person parts from his sins that he may see the divine faces.’ The deceased begins: ‘Hail to you, ye lords of the Two-fold Maât. . . . I have come to thee, my lord, I have brought myself to see thy glories. . . . I know thy name, and the names of the forty-two gods who are with thee in the Hall of the Two-fold Maât, who live by the punishment of the wicked, and devour their blood on that day of weighing the words in presence of Unnefer, the triumphant.’ A good deal which follows in the Turin copy is not contained in all the manuscripts. But the following extracts deserve mention. ‘I have brought you Law, and subdued for you iniquity. I am not a doer of fraud and iniquity against men. I am not a doer of that which is crooked in place of that which is right. I am not cognizant of iniquity; I am not a doer of evil. I do not force a laboring man to do more than his daily task. . . . I do not calumniate a servant to his master; I do not cause hunger; I do not cause weeping; I am not a murderer; I do not give order to murder privily; I am not guilty of fraud against anyone; I am not a falsifier of the measures in the temples. . . . I

literature we must confine ourselves to mathematics.<sup>1</sup>

As concerns the religions of the other ancient nations, one need not be particularly schooled, to reach the conclusion that the reverence entertained by these different nations, whilst different, differed only in degree and not in kind ; that the tenacity of the faith of each in its fetich or formal creed was proportional to the degree of consolation derived therefrom ; nor is an intimate acquaintance with any of them essential to the still broader conclusion that it was sacred prepossession, intimately associated with a sustaining sense of consolation, that gave to each nation not only an assurance of the verity of its own creed but a like assurance of the fallacy of every other. This, of course, made impossible a dispassionate contrast by any nation between its own theology and alien theologies. The assumption of the absoluteness of the truth of its own theology involved an inference of the insufficiency of

do not add to the weight of the scale ; I do not falsify the indicator of the balance ; I do not withhold milk from the mouth of the suckling.' The catalogue of the forty-two sins, each of which has an avenging deity, includes some of those I have quoted and omits others. The sins are not catalogued according to any scientific arrangement. Besides the crime of violence and theft, different sins against chastity are mentioned ; not only evil speaking and lying, but exaggeration, chattering, and idle words are condemned ; he who reviles the king, his father, or his god, the evil listener, and he who turns a deaf ear to the words of truth or justice, he who causes pain of mind to another, or who in his heart thinks meanly of his god—all these fail to satisfy the conditions of admission into the ranks of the triumphant dead."—*Id.*, pp. 202, 203.

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, p. 28.



every theology save its own to impart true consolation to him who accepted it. We moderns, to the extent that we can look objectively at the creeds of the different ancient nations and study the consolations which each derived from its own creed, are forced to conclude not only that their consolations were no warrant to any of them for the truth of their theology, but on the contrary their reliance upon consolation incapacitated each nation for determining the relative truth of its own theology. The divinities of these different nations, their dogmas, and their rituals of worship were as different as they could be. The theology of each exhibits its own special characteristics not only regarding mortal existence, but, what is even more significant, regarding the question of immortality or future individual continuance. With perhaps the single exception of the Egyptian, the ancient theologies gave no prominence, and certainly no definiteness, to the idea of individual immortality.<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of many of the more advanced

<sup>1</sup> There is no affirmation of human immortality in the Old Testament, whether it be held to be interpolated or properly to belong to the text, which is more positive in expression than the following denial of immortality:

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go into one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"—*Ecclesiastes*, chap. iii., v. 19, 20, 21, 22.

scholars of to-day, no conception of the personal continuance of life after death was generally entertained among the Hebrews up to the coming of Jesus; at best, such a conception was but vaguely and very differently held at different periods of their history. Apart from any question as to how far specific references to individual immortality in the older Hebrew texts are to be regarded as post-exilic interpolations, the general tone of the Old Testament seems to be opposed to the idea of a definite immortality, and the thought cannot be said to have been prominent in the minds of the writers of this part of the Scriptures as a subject of ecstatic contemplation. The Sheol to which the dead were generally consigned suggested nothing highly hopeful. The promises which gave the Hebrews real solace had no reference to another world. Their prayers were that their days might be long in the land which the Lord their God gave to them. Job's assurance of divine favor was derived from God's doubling his possessions, giving to him a new family, and extending his life upon earth one hundred and forty years. This was the poetic ending of his career.<sup>1</sup> It was the glory of the patriarchs

<sup>1</sup> The latest exegetical interpretation of the often-cited passage contained in the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of the xix. chap. of Job, beginning, "For I know that my redeemer liveth," is as follows: "I know that my avenger liveth, and that a surviving kinsman shall arise upon my grave as my defender. He will infuse new life into my skin, which had to suffer leprosy, and will by this give an actual proof of my rectitude." (*Cf.* chap. xlii., v. 10.) "And it is God himself who shall avenge me, He shall be the god that calleth me up out of the grave, and maketh me whole again."

In commenting upon this, the critic says: "We look upon the

that they lived to enjoy a mellow age. The favor of the Lord was exhibited to Moses in granting a continuance of his physical health and strength—keeping his eye undimmed and his natural force unabated—for one hundred and twenty years.

Among the Greeks, the belief in a personal immortality varied greatly and was vaguely held; it seemed to afford them little or no pleasant thought. Hades expressed to their imagination only a vague condition of after-life, and was no more comforting than was Sheol to the Hebrews; Proserpine the guardian of the Fields of the Dead, was the most mournful goddess of all their mythology; but they did derive consolation from the favor which they expected and which they thought they received from the gods during their earthly lives.

The records of Assyria and Babylon which have come down to us leave us in doubt as to how far these nations entertained a definite creed regarding a future life, for there are data from which different and contrary conclusions may be derived. According to Rawlinson, the idea of immortality did not occupy a prominent place in their minds.<sup>1</sup> Lenormant says

whole passage as a later gloss in which the resurrection of the just is regarded as a possibility. (*Cf.* Daniel, ch. xii., v. 13; 2 Macc. ch. vii., v. 9, 11, contrary to the opinion put forth in the Book of Job with regard to Sheol, ch. iii., etc.)."

(*The Book of Job*, Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text, with Notes by C. Siegfried, Professor in the University of Jena. English Translation of the Notes by R. E. Brünnow, Professor in the University of Heidelberg. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press; 1893, p. 38.)

(See also "The Original Poem of Job." E. J. Dillon. *The Contemporary Review*, July, 1893, p. 116.)

<sup>1</sup> *Religions of the Ancient World*, Rawlinson, New York, 1883, p. 62.

of the Assyrians that, though they recognized a place of departed spirits, it was one "in which there was no trace of a distinction of rewards and punishments."<sup>1</sup>

The Hindoo conceived a continuance after death, but it was not individual or personal. He did not contemplate anything like immortality as we understand the term. The consolations which his views of the future afforded him were founded upon the thought that in some mystical way his individuality should cease through the complete absorption expressed in the term Nirvana.

Upon this question of individual immortality, then, the Egyptian religion stands in startling contrast with all the theologies I have named. There cannot be any doubt, from the almost innumerable and specific references to a future state which occur in Egyptian texts and the great prominence which is given to the subject, that the Egyptian idea of immortality was a precise belief, and that from it the greater consolations which the Egyptian enjoyed were derived.

In the case of all these theologies, however, the sense of certainty regarding ideals of creed is exhibited by the degree of consolation each nation derived from its devotion to its particular belief. However clearly we, viewing the different creeds from the outside, may see the lines of distinction between them and the grounds of preference for one over another, not one of the nations holding them could have been induced to exchange any part of its own creed for the creed of another nation.

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Past*, vol. i., p. 143.

The divinities of each nation were evolved from the aspirations of each; thus evolved, they were reverently transmitted from age to age. The qualities imputed to the different divinities in individual or national worship brought consolation to the devotee, and this consolation supported the sense of certainty held by each individual concerning the verity of his gods and of every detail of his creed.

Although the modern theologian, on account of his reverent disposition to reject the corollaries of knowledge, does not study the influence of ancient religions in a thoroughly objective manner, nevertheless he cannot remain altogether unaffected by archæological research; and to the extent that he is impelled by the broader study of the secular archæologist to acknowledge, in the case of ancient theologies, the part which consolation has played in impressing the worshipper with the absolute truth of all the vagaries, solecisms, and absurdities contained in their creed, he must feel warned of the valuelessness of the ancient consolation in determining the verity of the ancient creeds. To the extent, moreover, that he is impelled to identify the consolation by which the ancients determined the verity of their creeds with the feeling of consolation which influences the modern worshipper, he must realize that a sense of consolation serves to support in any reverent mind vagaries from which no reasoning of others directly employed can deliver it.

Meanwhile the secular student, unprepossessed by sacred theories, may draw natural and normal inferences from the historical facts which he derives

from archæological research, and contrast not only the ancient theologies with each other, but the ancient with the modern. Thus studying the force and influence of consolation as it behaves in all theologic prepossessions, he finds it utterly worthless as a test for the verity of creed, seeing how it certifies creed to him who holds it without reference to its quality; and he concludes that the office of consolation is merely to maintain in the mind sophistications placed there by authority, to guard the mind against the intrusion of knowledge from without, and to enable it to repel anything which threatens to disturb the serenity of its sacred prepossessions.

Let us now briefly undertake to examine objectively the behavior of the modern devotees under the influence of this consolation, as that behavior is exhibited under the progressive influence of secular knowledge.

So extremely personal is the sense of reverence in an intensely reverent mind, that it will not permit its possessor to believe in the power of any ideals save his own, to console another; he is led not only to condemn the precise objects of another's faith, but to conclude that all conduct arising from and associated with that faith must be wrong. The personal quality of the feeling in the individual is exhibited likewise in what may be called the personality of the body of theology, or religion, for religion will be found in this relation to be but a modification of theology. That phase of the organization called the Church, to which the reverent individual

belongs, contains by theologic implication, mysteriously within itself, a supernatural power to certify absolute truth.

This whole theologic theory bears an inseparable relation to morals, since by it obedience to command is held as something superior to moral conduct. Locke's statement that "the clergy are naturally more eager against error than against vice," was strikingly illustrated by Luther, who held that belief would overcome and correct any sin that he might commit, however grievous.<sup>1</sup> The history of theology shows that, just in proportion as the different custodians of theology have been rigid regarding their dogma, they, their adherents and their devotees, derived consolation from lines of conduct whose intrinsic moral quality was little considered by them, and from acts of God which they interpreted in the most opposite ways. Three centuries ago the

<sup>1</sup> Luther called the Epistle of James an "Epistle of straw" because it extolled the value of good works; nor would he have reason distinguish right from wrong conduct where faith intervened. On one occasion, being confronted with the necessity of employing reason, his retort was that "Reason is the Devil's harlot and can do nothing but blaspheme."

"Thou seest how rich is the Christian; even if he will he cannot destroy his salvation by any sins how grievous soever, unless he refuse to believe." (*Luther de Captiv. Bab.*, vol. ii., p. 264.) "Be thou a sinner, and sin boldly, but still boldly believe, and rejoice in Christ. From Him sin shall not separate us, no, though a thousand times in every day we should commit . . . murder." (*Episto. Lutheri*, Jena, 1556, vol. i., p. 548.) "Si, in fide fieri, posset adulterium, peccatum non esset." (*Luther Disput.*, vol. i., p. 523.) (Cited from *Symbolism*, by John Adam Mohler, D.D., Professor of Theology in the University of Munich. Translated by James B. Robertson, London, 1847.)

devout worshippers specifically measured the virtue or viciousness of a man's acts by man's agreement or disagreement with the interpretations made by their church. Under this practice the Protestants accounted for a plague prevailing in a Catholic country by determining that it was the expression of God's direct displeasure manifested against the Catholic creed; and in so doing these Protestants derived consolation from the belief that God was vindicating the truth of the Protestant creed by condemning that of the Catholic, and the consolations which they thus derived verified to them beyond doubt the correctness of their interpretation. To the Roman Catholics on the other hand, struggling with this disaster, this act of God so far from impressing them as any condemnation of their creed, caused them to adhere to it with all the more tenacity, and did not in the least interfere with the consolation which to them supported its verity.

Meanwhile the one thing common to both Protestant and Catholic was that each alike assumed to interpret Nature not by objective study of natural law, but by a theory of spiritual interpretation, and it was not of the slightest importance to either that the opposite interpretations conflicted, since the interpretation of each afforded consolation to each, and the consolation of each verified the interpretation of each.

When we study the behavior of consolation amid modern surroundings, we find that these surroundings have so modified it that it has come to certify to the individual a very much more considerate creed



than of old, and that its whole office is to support a sense of certainty concerning what the religionist at the time believes—in other words, concerning a faith which is in a state of ceaseless transition. Thus it is that the dependence of the reverent mind upon its consolations for the support of the verity of its dogma is gradually undermined. Nothing, however, is more natural than that the reverent mind should ignore the changes going on within itself. Its possessor continues to treat consolation as an unfailing support for the verity of what remains to him. His view of its purport is at one with the whole theory of theology with reference to faith: that there is something mysterious in its office.

He feels that, no matter how he may happen to have lost part of his old specific belief, the only possible way in which he can lose any of that which remains to him would be by the deliberate work of some occult and vicious power, which should compel him to doubt in spite of his felt assurances—a power capable of working an inexplicable transformation, by wrestling with him, overcoming him by supernatural strength, taking out of him the entity best worth having, blunting his moral instincts and leaving a void in his being. It is impossible for him to measure his future course by his past experience. With whatever calm he can look upon the accomplished displacement of his old ideals through the impulsion of knowledge, he remains so unconscious of the process by which this took place, that he cannot regard the displacement of his existing ideals with any other feeling than one of dread; he cannot

realize that belief is not an entity, but a phase or mode of feeling which is essentially conditioned upon its harmony with his moral being. The dread of such a loss as his imagination conjures up is in fact never realized.<sup>1</sup> No man ever parted with a cherished ideal with a deliberate purpose of defying his conviction; nor is it possible for any malevolent power so to affect him. Every phase of change that takes place in a man's faith in supersensual things is brought about by natural causes—influences so operating upon the objects of his faith as to make them fall out of harmony with his mental integrity,

<sup>1</sup> In a paper published in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1883, entitled "The Responsibilities of Unbelief," the author gives a conversation between three rationalists, and makes one of his characters, after expressing the intense desire he has felt to "believe in the beautiful dreams which console other men," go on to say: "Instead of letting myself believe, I forced myself to doubt and examine all the more; I forced myself to study all the subjects which seemed as if they must make my certainty of evil only stronger and stronger. I instinctively hated science, because science had destroyed my belief in justice and mercy" (p. 47).

Writers who reason thus about the effect of disbelief in specific dogma exhibit a total ignorance of the law by which the human mind moves under the influence of knowledge. Entertaining the beliefs which they make their characters deny, they cause these characters to talk about doubt as if it were a thing that could be taken up and dropped at will; as if it were something other than an operation of the mind in its instinctive effort to find moral harmony. As if a man could give mental assent to the doctrine of evolution and yet entertain a painful feeling that the sacred account of creation was the more correct, and that in refusing to accept this sacred account he was, in spite of his mental convictions, perverse of nature, sinful in disposition, and defiant of the Almighty. The picture is a purely imaginary one; men of flesh and blood and intellect do not so behave under the influence of knowledge.

and substituting for them something more in accordance with this mental integrity. In this process solace accompanies the change. The ideals first lose the aura of sacredness before reverence for them fails. Whilst, then, apprehension of spiritual loss is one of the most profound causes of the reluctance of an individual to yield to the persuasions of knowledge, a law of mind nevertheless impels him to yield when the fact becomes so irresistible as to prove the ideal illusory. Nature, in thus affecting man's thought, operates by subtle persuasion. A study of its process assures us that, whatever a man's apprehension may be, his discovery of a new law of nature, or a new fact of physical science, cannot make him gloomy. He may be disappointed at its first suggestion; he may resist its progress; but once let it be appropriated by his mind, it will remain there, because it is rhythmical and not discordant. As it displaces an old ideal, it produces a sense of mental exhilaration, and dread gives way to pleasure. Thenceforth mental disturbance ceases, so far as that specific displacement is concerned; nor can the mind ever wish to exchange the new truth for the old ideal, and return to ignorance which it has thoroughly overcome. The professional theologian, because of the theory of theology which makes it his bounden duty to stand by his sacred prepossessions and defend the faith once delivered to the saints, fancies that his consolations furnish a full support for his creed, but even with him the impulsions of knowledge constantly require new adjustments. The reconciliation

of his faith to knowledge he cannot resist, for, struggle as he may to retain so much of his old faith as has not been already specifically displaced, the movement of knowledge progressively impels his acquiescence and consent. The influences which make him pity the ignorance of his narrower fellows on the one hand, and the remaining sacred prepossessions which impel him to condemn the progress of more advanced students on the other, only emphasize the inherently progressive character of secular knowledge, and the inherently statical character of his sacred prepossessions.

The solaces which Christianity afforded in the ages of faith, like those afforded by ancient religions, were conditioned upon ignorance. The ignorance upon which they rested has not been removed by any artificial or sudden process, but by natural and slowly moving influences. No set of men ever changed the indirect course of impersonal Nature by the substitution of direct processes. She has wrought her changes, not by authority or dictation, not by man's direct reasoning or dissuasions, not by efforts at coercion, but through the persistent force of law. There is nothing in these processes, so far as they relate to the development of the human mind, that can be called sudden; the intellectual and moral advancement of mankind has not been through any cataclysms. Nature, in undermining the objects upon which the consolation of faith in the supersensual has rested, has proceeded by slowly substituting the definite for the vague, realization for idealism, new adaptations for old inadaptations,

harmony for inharmony, the fit for the unfit, with a complete concatenation in her progress. No matter what apprehension may fill the reverent mind as it sees its still cherished ideals leaving other minds, no matter how it may anticipate disaster to the world, the processes of crumbling and rebuilding go ceaselessly on. Those who cannot, by reason of their prepossessions, study this movement objectively, nevertheless come under its influence because of its moral power; for the progress of knowledge in furthering intellectual harmony furthers moral harmony concerning all that man in his present estate is capable of reaching. A full realization of the moral right and duty of each one for himself to seek truth through unfettered inquiry involves the recognition of a degree of freedom entirely inconsistent with the theory of theology; progress requires something better than an ultimate reliance upon consolation derived from ideals held as sacred. Whilst the free search for truth cannot destroy the searcher's power of hoping, the world's search for knowledge cannot be satisfied with ideals. Such a search must set out with the acceptance of the fact that truth is inexorable, and that consolations are only adjustments of the human mind—that truth itself cannot be contorted to comply with man's preferences or with his ideals. The highest degree of human happiness attainable under normal conditions, then, is compatible with the subordination of all ideals to such test as is afforded by knowledge. Such subordination accomplished, all human consolations will rest upon the harmony of the mind with what it

knows, and the best thought of mankind will be contributed by those who constantly measure the value of their ideals by the test of their knowledge—not by those who confuse their ideals with their knowledge or place them above it.

In the pursuit of knowledge, science can only insist that faith in the supersensual shall constantly be open to the tests of reason, and that the theory of necessary truths beyond the reach of reason, cannot justify any body of men in commanding the acceptance of ideals and demanding reverence for them. Science is bound to hold that a sense of consolation, experienced by those who reverently accept theology's declarations, is no warrant whatever for the truth of those declarations; that the serenity with which the votaries of religion will face dangers, while it may attest their sincerity, affords no evidence of the truth of the objects of their faith.

Emerson says of Jeremy Taylor, whom he calls the Chrysostom of England :

“ His words are music in my ear ;  
I see his cowlèd portrait dear,  
And yet for all his faith could see,  
I would not that good bishop be.”

A modern secular student may in the same manner contemplate the aspirations, the ideals, the sincerity, and gentleness of Emerson, as implied in his efforts to define the “Spiritual Laws” and the “Over-soul,”—in a word, to reach truth beyond the human understanding,—without entertaining the least reverence for the gentle philosopher's conclu-

sions. This student may for a like reason admire highly the heroism, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and sincerity, manifested by any zealous and religious nature, without in the least revering the creeds which call forth such devotion. It is because the secularist is relieved of the dominance of sacred ideals that he is enabled to regard all individual instances of church piety, faith, and sincerity just as Emerson regarded the qualities of Jeremy Taylor; since secularism rests upon the profound moral principle which underlies all genuine human thought, and which is essential to the preservation of moral and intellectual integrity—that reverence is obstructive to knowledge, that consolation is no warrant for truth. Just to the degree that the recognition of this principle becomes general, to that degree will man overcome his disposition to bow to sacred authority, and to that degree will he cease to hold consolation as a support for the verity of creed.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SACRED AUTHORITY AS INFLUENCED BY THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE.

**I**N a former chapter I undertook to examine the issue between science and advanced or liberal theology.<sup>1</sup> In view of what I have written in the intervening chapters, I shall return to this issue for the purpose of considering the theologic theory of a seat for sacred authority, and of studying the course of the individual theological mind in its effort to apply this theory. In making my examination, I shall employ a statement of the issue made by Mr. Martineau, setting forth the province of theology as distinguished from that of science. His statement is made with more than usual theologic definiteness, and serves to illustrate the influence of his theory upon his own mental movement.

No one can become acquainted with Mr. Martineau's writings without being impressed by his individuality, his earnestness, his dialectic skill, and his catholic spirit. He recognizes, as completely as any theologian can, how widely honest men may differ on the most important points of doctrine and creed. He appreciates as completely as any theologian can

<sup>1</sup> Chapter VII.



the extent to which differences of doctrine and creed may be due to the degrees of influence which are exerted upon different minds by modern knowledge; but he illustrates also by his own mental movement how a reverent student, though able to detect and expose the restraining influence of sacred ideals upon the understanding of others, may be unconscious of the deterring influence of like ideals upon his own mind. No modern writer has more conclusively demonstrated the demoralizing effect of the demand of orthodoxy that the world should bow to authority which interferes with and represses knowledge; nor has any one more skilfully convicted the reverent sense of ignorance and superstition by exhibiting its behavior in honest but narrow theologians. Yet his own career illustrates how one may detect the illusory character of the reverent sense by observing its behavior in other minds, and still hold this same sense within himself as a divine illumination, affording him absolute certainty of all that lies beyond the reach of knowledge and of reason; and how one may exhibit all gentleness in urging the persuasions of that knowledge by which his old illusions have become dispelled, while manifesting all sternness in demanding the whole world's obedience to some authority which supports the ideals not yet driven from his own mind.

In undertaking to divide the province of science from that of religion, Mr. Martineau says:

"The old book of Genesis . . . relates that it took six days to make the universe, and recounts what was

done on each ; how, first, Day and Night, then Heaven and Earth, then Land and Sea, were parted from each other ; how, between the creation of vegetable and animal life the greater and lesser lights were set aloft ; how the water and the air were peopled before the solid ground, and man came last of all to rule the other tribes ; and live upon the fruits of the field ;—in all this, it essays the language of Science, and is open to correction from every fresh reading of the order and method of the world. And so, when the modern book of Genesis wants years by the million for every day of that Creation-week ; when it deals with spaces in which ten thousand of those ‘firmaments’ would be lost ; when it alters all the elements and transposes all the order, and distributes to be done forever what had been gathered up to be despatched at once ; . . . in all this, it also speaks what Science has a right to say, though it compels all the prophets to retract, and apostles to sit still and learn.

“As religion has no voice about the order of phenomena, conversely, the order of phenomena has nothing to say about religion : they sit perfectly clear of each other : nor is any delusion more absolute than the notion that the one can ever contradict the other. Causality, with which alone religion in this relation has to do, is not amenable to the same faculties that take cognizance of method,—those by which we perceive, compare, arrange : it cannot be heard, smelt, or seen : no lens can fetch it into view ; no generalization reach further than its effects ; no classification grasp more than its outward expressions. It is no object of sense ; or of inference from any combination of the data of sense : and a merely observing, sifting, discriminating mind, however keen its perceptions, however delicate its feeling of resemblance and difference, could never come across it. It may,—

may must,—be thought : it may be named : but it is added on by the intellect to the experiences of perception ; not drawn by the intellect out of them. It is by an inner necessity of Reason that we refer all phenomena, single or grouped, disposed into this picture or into that, scattered in negligence or reduced by induction, to an originating Power : and precisely at this point it is, where Science has already come to an end, that Religion begins and undertakes to speak of that which remains when the account of phenomena is closed.”<sup>1</sup>

The issue thus stated may be more definitely set forth in these four propositions : First, that science does not and cannot pretend to explain the origin of things ; second, that it is necessary that the origin of things be thought of and explained ; third, that theology, or (as Mr. Martineau prefers to call it) religion, has derived from some sacred source the power to explain causation<sup>2</sup> ; and fourth, that it is

<sup>1</sup> Martineau, *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses*, vol. iii., pp. 191-193. London, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Martineau might seem to imply, from his obvious preference for the word religion to the word theology, that creed and doctrine are not involved in religion as they are in theology ; but this cannot be the case, since he elsewhere recognizes—what indeed cannot be denied—that all concordant belief involves a creed, and does not dispense with theology. Indeed, he says that a proposal which would indicate otherwise “ would simply be insane, that ‘ He that cometh to God must believe that He is ’ ; and if twenty people come to God they must believe in agreeing that He is.” (*The New Affinities of Faith*, p. 19. James Martineau, Boston, 1869.) The proposition involves even more than Mr. Martineau’s statement of it would seem to many minds to imply, because he who comes to God must not only believe that He is, but must believe that he knows who He is ; that is, he must believe that he knows what God’s attributes are ; and

the duty of all minds—which includes all scientific minds—to accept with reverence the explanation which theology or religion offers.

There are two irrelevant inferences involved in this issue, to which I shall call direct attention here, although I consider them incidentally throughout the course of the argument. The first of these is that, because science cannot directly deal with causation, it may not therefore test the theologic or religious efforts at explanation, by examining the developed consequences of those efforts; the second is that, inasmuch as it is necessary for us to think of first and final causes, we must therefore conclude that theology or religion can correctly explain these causes, and that its explanation must be accepted as conclusive. This latter corollary is a necessity, since otherwise theology or religion could not pretend that it is the duty of man to give any assent or reverence to these explanations.

As to a definite location or seat for the authority

inasmuch as there is no possible means by which man can determine these attributes by the use of his normal faculties, the believer must either feel possessed of something other than normal faculty or must recognize some extraneous authority by which to reach determination. This creed is quite as essential to religion as it is to theology; and however much a theologian may wish to avoid the name of creed, he must have the substance of creed in his religion; however much he may wish to avoid the name of theology, he must have the substance of theology in his religion. So that religion in this relation and theology are substantially convertible terms, or at best but express differences in the degree of specific creed necessary for support; and if there be a conflict between theology and science, that conflict must subsist just so long as either religion or theology involves a sense of reverence for ideals.

by which religion or theology is assumed to explain with correctness the cause of all things, Mr. Martineau leaves us in great doubt; but the fault is not his—it inheres in his subject. In the very constitution of all Protestant theology or religion there is a degree of vagueness concerning the terms and place of sacred authority, of which this phase of theology or religion cannot possibly divest itself. Just as the Protestant theologian approaches the necessity for precision in locating and defining, his efforts become marked with a spiritual haziness. He is impelled to treat authority ideally, as something which at one time requires mental persuasion for its efficacy and at another unquestioning mental submission. By oscillating between these two opposites he indulges in a vain hope that he may establish a spiritual alliance between them upon which the assurance of his faith may securely rest. Protestant theology lost its power of location by becoming Protestant. The loss was involved in the assertion of the right of private judgment to interpret. Mr. Martineau has written elaborately upon this particular subject,<sup>1</sup> but I have been unable to find that he anywhere locates the power of precise declaration in any one seat; in his effort he wanders from the individual to the organization, and from the organization back again to the individual.

The importance of a clear delineation of the seat of authority whose declarations are to be final and unquestionable, cannot be over-stated. Every man

<sup>1</sup> *The Seat of Authority in Religion.* London, 1890.

has the right to a categorical answer to his question : Whence comes the high prerogative of commanding man to accept without questioning—to accept with reverence conclusions which do not reach him through the channels of his own mind? It does not need much reflection to enable one to appreciate that between the idea of authority located in the individual mind and the idea of it located apart from the individual mind, there is all the difference in the world.

If the ultimate power to determine the highest verities has its seat in an ecclesiastical body divinely illuminated, then the Church is paramount, and the individual is but a subject and a servant. If on the other hand that ultimate power dwells within the individual, it is but a truism to say that his right to its exercise, so far as concerns himself, is paramount. It is logically certain that authority cannot be exercised in an ultimate manner both by an organized body and by the individual. It cannot be divided ; nor can it be confounded with conference. If it has its seat in the Church, it cannot be thought of as consistent with individual freedom of will. By inherent necessity it must require its devotees to walk in paths appointed, to manifest their piety and their faith by their obedience to direction ; it must require these devotees to recognize the Church as the rightful suppressor of individual thought, the rightful dictator of conclusions, and to recognize themselves only as the reflection and the expression of the Church's will. If this theory of authority be correct, there is no existing organization that has a

better prescriptive right to its exercise than has the Church of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

It is in opposition to this that science holds the seat of authority to be in the individual and nowhere else; that it holds authority to begin and end with the individual; that it holds that if a number of individuals choose to delegate the exercise of their individual authority to an organization, their delegation is but an agreement binding those who enter into it, and can have no force upon those who do not join in it; that the right by which each sect refuses to be bound by the demands of another sect has its foundation in the right by which each individual may refuse to be bound by the declarations of sects or by the declarations of other individuals.

The irrepressible issue therefore is between the theory held by Rome and that held by science. The Protestant theologians approach the issue with an effort to compromise it; but it is one which utterly refuses compromise. The theory that heaven has conferred a power of final decision upon two distinct agencies which in the exercise of their power may and must conflict with each other, involves an irreconcilable contradiction. If it should ever be determined that ultimate authority has its proper seat in an organ-

<sup>1</sup> I think we must recognize that what has sustained the unity of the Church of Rome is the logic with which it has set forth the unity of its authority. The force of this logic more than anything else holds it together to-day, and is continually drawing into the Church of Rome, Protestants who, in the growing diversity of creeds which they find about them in Protestantism, instinctively seek for authority which shall impart to them a sense of unity for faith.

ization, that determination must involve the end of individual intellectual freedom. If on the other hand it should ever come to be recognized that ultimate authority has its seat within the individual, that recognition will necessarily mark the end of all unity regarding the supersensual subjects upon which authority acts, and the whole foundation of theology will thereby be removed.

Let us now return to the question of the power of religion or theology to explain causation. The denial of its power rests, first, upon the incoherency of the Protestant theory as to a seat of authority, and, second, upon the actual consequences which have resulted in history from all theologic effort at definition of causation. And here it is that science by its fruits and by its methods necessarily interferes with theology's claim; for, although causation objectively studied is altogether beyond the bounds of scientific inquiry, it does not follow that science has nothing to do with the efforts of those who seek to solve the problem by their own so-called spiritual illumination. Theology's efforts at explaining first causes produce certain palpable consequences; these consequences are exhibited in historical development; they are part of the sequences of phenomena; they are on this account entirely proper objects for scientific investigation; and to say that, because science has nothing whatever to do directly with causation, it has therefore nothing to do with the theologians who assume to interpret causation, is to give expression to one of the commonest of the many irrelevant conclusions of theology.



There are three reasons which seem to me to preclude the possibility of maintaining, even by universal human agreement, a separate province within which theology or religion shall be enabled unaffected by science to pursue its efforts at delineating causation.

The first is that the kind of thinking which science induces and requires, tends, irrespective of the wish of the thinker, to tone the mind against reverent submission to authority ; and that, conversely, there is a kind of thinking inherent in theology which, irrespective of the individual wish of the theologian, prevents the normal exercise of his mental faculties and tends to make him contradict his own theory in every application of it. The second is that theology, so far as may be learned from the actual behavior of its representative sects, does not exhibit anything like unity of conclusion regarding causation, but, on the contrary, is replete with inconsistencies and contradictions. The third reason, and the most important, because it involves morals, is that the law of individual mental and moral integrity requires mental persuasion and rejects mental compulsion as the condition of its fullest and freest operation. Let us look at the force of these reasons.

That science induces and encourages a kind of thinking different from that demanded by theology is plain enough from the character of its fruits. That its kind of thinking obtains in the mind without the direct wish or purpose of the subject upon which it operates, is evident by its manner of reaching and affecting minds which directly resist it. The wide

divergence of thought and of conclusion among the class of theological thinkers called liberal, induced by the progress of scientific knowledge, obviously does not lie within the line of theologic purpose, since disunity of conclusion touching theologic premises is the one thing that all theology and all religion aims most to discourage. Nothing is more hostile to unity of doctrine than an influence which stimulates spontaneity of mental action, for such spontaneity inevitably produces mental individuality and discourages mental submission. This influence of science upon the theological mind is exhibited in every instance in which a theologian moves from narrowness to liberality, for every such movement is conditioned upon a lessened sense of assurance concerning the authority of dogma. Science, by impelling the mind to inquire, moves it in a direction opposite to the submission demanded by theology. An influence which exhibits itself in this manner cannot be thought of as concurrent with one which discourages individual thinking by dictating conclusions.

But it is not alone by a study of these direct influences of science that the assumptions of theology are questioned. There is a weakness in theology itself which warrants the contradiction of its claims to explain causation. The theologic theory that God demands devout reverence above all things from His devotees, requires us to conclude that His ways are not subject to reasonable inquiry. By this theory God, who is the origin of all things, gives these reverent devotees exclusive possession of all truth concerning Him and His works; in other

words, He has selected as His exclusive custodians of wisdom only men whose sense of reverence forbids their pursuing a course of calm inquiry. The necessary corollary is that God is disposed to discourage that inquiry by which alone a knowledge of His laws is acquired, and thus to determine that ignorance of those laws is preferable to a knowledge of them, and that such ignorance affords the most complete title to theology for the determination of ultimate causation. To answer this as the theologian does,—by assuming that divine wisdom imparted through illumination is essentially different from any wisdom that can be derived from that inquiry which leads to knowledge—does not strengthen the position of theology. Such wisdom is indeed not only different from that which is associated with knowledge, but it conflicts with knowledge, and however the theologic theory of it may be supported by the Pauline authority, which makes ignorance and foolishness the conditions of other-world wisdom, the theory does not comport with the experience of mankind; under a secular examination no theory can indeed be presented which more completely links ignorance with spiritual illumination, or knowledge with iniquity. It cannot be otherwise than that with the progress of non-reverent inquiry such a theory of wisdom must become more and more of a solecism. If indeed science were to concede to a sacred system of thought developing such wisdom, the power of explaining causation, and the right of demanding acceptance of its explanations, science might as well cease its efforts for the promotion of knowledge.

The second reason I have stated, why no agreement can ever enable science to accept with reverence the theologic or religious efforts as to the explanation of first causes, is that theology or religion, so far as may be judged by the behavior of its representative sects and individual devotees, exhibits nothing like unity of conclusion. No one who has the least acquaintance with the history of modern thought can deny that the theologic theory has been weakened by the influence of knowledge. The manifest errors in theology's interpretations of so much of causation as science is able to test, have affected unfavorably the general estimate of the quality of the "divine wisdom" which inspired them.

Mr. Martineau recognizes, in his own statement of the issue, that when science declares that there were millions of years for every day of the Creation-week; that when science deals with spaces in which ten thousand of those "firmaments" set forth in Genesis would be lost; that when it alters all the elements, and transposes all the order, and distributes to be done forever what had been gathered up to be despatched at once; it has a right to speak, though it compels all the prophets to retract and the apostles to sit still and learn. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the account of the beginning set forth in Genesis contains the most specific and explicit utterances of what theology commanded to be accepted as holy; that for nearly eighteen hundred years all doubt of any of these specific statements was condemned by orthodox Christians everywhere, and associated in their minds with the

idea of utter intellectual and moral degradation; that the questionings of modern science which Mr. Martineau adopts were wholly forbidden. We must recollect further that the account of Genesis involves many points which throughout Christendom are held as the essentials of orthodox belief to-day; that the idea of the perfection of man at the beginning, of his fall through the sin of inquiry, and of the scheme of his salvation through faith, is by no means yet abandoned by orthodox theologians. Whilst Mr. Martineau may not and doubtless does not accept many of these phases of theologic determination, he must recognize that in denying them he is but exercising freedom of individual thought concerning the contents of what he still in a general way holds as sacred writ, and that, notwithstanding his rejection of them, they are no less parts of the authoritative writings of Christendom.

For nearly nineteen hundred years Christian theology has had almost exclusive custody in Christendom of the doctrine of causation. If we would determine the character of its stewardship, we must study the manner in which it has dealt with this problem. It still declares a self-created personal Almighty who "in the beginning" originated heaven and earth. Although scientific exploration has pressed first causes farther back into vagueness, it has not thereby lessened theology's resolve to continue to account for a beginning by authoritative declaration. To the degree that science has been enabled to test the efforts of theology, to that degree, as Mr. Martineau intimates, the prophets have been

compelled to retract and the apostles to sit still and learn.

It is not alone with the substitution by science of a secular for a sacred account that we have to deal, but with the more important fact that theology in its interpretations of the First Cause exhibits almost innumerable differences and contradictions. Each of its sects differs from all the others in most important points of definition, these differences ranging from the most precise to the most vague. Hence science naturally asks: For what particular delineation of causation can theology, as a system of thought, demand acceptance? The confusion of her fruits is limited only by the number of her sects; and when she claims that science should submit to her general assumption of spiritual illumination for defining causation, nothing can be more reasonable than that science should request her first to make her delineation definite. If she cannot do this, she presents no real delineation; for the sum of all theologic efforts, when the differences and the contradictions involved have been eliminated, leaves only the idea of a Power, greater than ourselves, that is inscrutable.

The whole theory of theology is contradicted by its practice. Its attitude would be well described if a theologian were to say to a disciple of science: "We have yielded to you wherein you have convicted us of our error in our attempt through spiritual illumination to define the cause of things; but you admit that you have reached the limit of your power to touch this cause; for this reason it

becomes your duty not only to forget our past mis-delineations, but for the future to recognize the limitlessness of our power, to accept our definitions or some of them, and to reverence such as you accept."

But by far the most important reason for the refusal by science to recognize the assumptions of theology rests upon the principle of individual mental and moral integrity—a principle which underlies all honest human thought and which conditions the progress of knowledge. This principle forbids mental suppression, from whatever source; it encourages inquiry. No more striking application of it can be found than Mr. Martineau's own refusal to act upon all that the theologic theory involves. He, no more than any other honest man, will submit to conclusions dictated by authority, which do not accord with his own moral and intellectual sense; he, as much as any, will insist upon cherishing that freedom by which he is enabled to gain knowledge, and to employ the fruits of knowledge in resisting the theologic assumptions of Rome, of China, of Persia, or of India. He has that within himself which forbids his reverence for declarations from these sources. In exercising his integrity, he illustrates the fallacy of the whole theologic theory touching its assumptions to command and to delineate the noumena; he denies to it a power, derived elsewhere than from reason, for interpreting first causes; and he thereby illustrates the fallacy by which he himself sets up a sacred power. For, if Mr. Martineau refuses to bow to the assumptions of Rome be-

cause his sense of truth will not permit him, by what possible reason can he command another to accept his theory of illumination and to bow to it? Upon what moral principle can it be the duty of any one, having derived conclusions by honest inquiry through the normal processes of his mind, to submit to contrary conclusions declared by some assumed authority which demands of him the profession of a creed? If no such duty exists, may not one hold that intuitions lead toward truth only when he who has them ceases to demand reverence from others for them, and ceases to reverence them himself; when he stands ready to subject them to the judgment, the intellect, and the moral sense of mankind—in a word, to the test of modern thought and modern inquiry?

The whole path over which the liberal theologians have travelled from their earliest sophistications of childhood, is strewn with products of their spiritual illuminations which they have themselves discarded. In instance after instance, as new knowledge resulting from secular inquiry has appealed to them, they have been required to reject this or that specific utterance of the old authority. In every case the appeal made has been to individual mental and moral integrity. When, then, they shall have come to realize in their own experience, the underlying reason for the experiences of others, they will have to conclude that there is a universal principle which requires that no dictation, whether expressed through an individual or through a custodian of creed, whether assumed to be derived from reve-



lation or directly from a sacred intuition, can have in morals any binding force. The dilemma of all theologians is that, although their own advance has been through the impressions of secular knowledge, overcoming in separate instances their sense of reverence and dread of what they call spiritual loss, their remaining reverence nevertheless impels them to resist the further progress of this knowledge. Science naturally asks whether the individual integrity, which requires the minds of theologians to move from ideal to fact, is virtuous only in them, and becomes vicious when exercised by another. The only logical answer is a denial that there is any moral foundation for sacred authority. If there were indeed a body really illuminated from heaven with the power of determining absolute truth, it might command science to accept its definitions as conclusive ; but such a body would have to give a clear account of its sole right, not merely by claiming such right, but by so exercising it that its reaches beyond knowledge should at least not conflict with the palpable fruits of knowledge, and that its methods should not be essentially hostile to the progress of knowledge. The utterances of any body which cannot thus prove its claims are merely dogmatic assumptions. If, in facing the problems which lie outside of the domain of human knowledge, the mind recognizes that the infinite is really beyond the finite, that the ineffable is really unutterable and that the unconditioned is above the conditioned, then it must be admitted that that law which justifies the individual theologian in refusing to accept any inter-

pretation of the infinite, the ineffable, and the unconditioned with which his intelligence does not accord, is the expression of a universal principle of individual mental freedom regarding the supersensual, and any violation of this law involves a violation of moral right. The unrestricted operation of this law of mental individuality involves the exercise of self-restraint by each individual as a condition of his own individual freedom to think and to conclude. Here, then, is a law which persistently, although gradually, moves the human mind from a sense of sacredness with reference to all that is ultramental, tending to reduce all reverent faith in the supersensual to the quality of opinion, thus reaching at last the very root of reverence.<sup>1</sup> When, under this law, Mr. Martineau refuses to reverence the Baal set up by any alien authority, he should recognize that his right of non-reverence rests upon a principle which forbids

<sup>1</sup> I know of no statement which, separated from its context, more clearly sets forth the moral right to non-reverence, and implies more clearly the interference of reverence with clear thought, than the following from the pen of Dr. Arnold :

“To tax anyone with want of reverence, because he pays no respect to what we venerate, is either irrelevant, or is a mere confusion. The fact, so far as it is true, is no reproach, but an honor ; because to reverence all persons and all things is absolutely wrong ; reverence shown to that which does not deserve it, is no virtue ; no, not even an amiable weakness, but a plain folly and sin. But if it be meant that he is wanting in proper reverence, not respecting what is really to be respected, that is assuming the whole question at issue, because what we call divine, he calls an idol ; and as, supposing that we are in the right, we are bound to fall down and worship, so supposing him to be in the right, he is no less bound to pull it to the ground and destroy it.”—Arnold's *Lectures on Modern History*, London, 1843, pp. 210, 211.

him, in turn, to require the disciples of science to entertain reverence for what seems to them a Baal set up by him and his school.

Involved in the question of a sacred authority there are two dogmas. One is that of divine necessity, or determinism, as it has more lately been called ; the other is that of free-will. No matter how liberal a man may consider himself to be, so long as he continues to entertain a reverence for any part of that which he cannot know, he must encounter these paradoxes. They confront him in every effort he makes to justify his claim for authority, or to delineate causation, or to study his relation to his divinity by seeking to fix the attributes of that divinity. The fathers of the Church, from Justin the Martyr to St. Augustine, gave prominence to the doctrine of free-will. With Augustine began the prominence of the dogma of predestination founded on the doctrine of necessity ; this dominated the Church for more than two centuries, and threw a gloom over it which at length became wellnigh insupportable. It was on this account that during the pontificate of Gregory in the sixth century the doctrine of purgatory (the germs of which may have existed from the time of Origen) was incorporated into the faith of the Church as a means of modifying the rigors of the doctrine of necessity. After the Reformation, mainly through the influence of Calvin, this doctrine again gained unusual prominence and divided the churches of Protestantism, imparting gloom wherever it prevailed. It is the effort of modern theology to modify these two dogmas so as to make them

acceptable to human reason ; but, as they are irreconcilable, the effort involves a solecism. Whatever support they have must depend upon theologic authority.

In order that we may better estimate the quality of the authority which is assumed to support them, let us look at the manner in which they have become gradually modified, and the character of the influences which produced this modification. As I have just said, before the Reformation and for a time after it, the conflict between the dogmas served to intensify theologic feeling. Believers in the dogma of free-will had recourse to their reason in attacking the dogma of necessity. They charged that a God who selected a man before his birth for everlasting favor or condemnation was merely the embodiment of fate, and, further, that a God who could select for condemnation a human being whom He brought into existence, having determined his condemnation before his existence began, and who could pass him through a miserable earthly life under this condemnation in order to land him in eternal torture, could not be other than the embodiment of a cruel fate—that such a God could not by any possibility embody justice, as justice is understood by man. Thus the disciples of free-will found the dogma of necessity absolutely revolting to their reason ; they could not accept it as consistent with their ideas of beneficence. On the other hand, the disciples of the doctrine of necessity reasoned against the dogma of free-will with the most rigorous logic, from the premises of God's omnipotence. They charged that

no instance could be found in which any human being ever acted with entire independence or through motives originating in himself—that is, motives behind which there was not an impelling cause ; and that, if one such could by any miracle be found, he would illustrate the absurdity of an Omnipotent God who could create man and yet endow him with entire independence of his Creator. Although each of the contestants attacked the paradox of the other with reason, neither had the slightest intention of permitting reason to touch his own paradox, resting it wholly on authority and sustaining it with intense feeling ; accordingly, where reason was impotent, he who held with intense devotion to the dogma of necessity pointed the finger of scorn at the disciple of free-will, and the disciple of free-will treated in the same manner the polemic of determinism.

In our day we witness little of the rancor with which these specific paradoxes were formerly attacked and defended. Both have fallen into neglect ; but they have not disappeared, nor can they disappear so long as theology or religion lasts. Some theory of necessity on the one hand, some theory of free-will on the other, is involved in every effort the theologian makes to form an idea of a personal and an emotional God, or to erect a seat of authority. Both theories are involved in every effort to conceive of the divine attributes of Omnipotence and Omniscience, and to harmonize these attributes with Justice and Mercy. The moderation we now observe must not be inferred as a result of the victory of one or the other disputant ; neither can be said to have forced the other

into acquiescence. The change is due altogether to the silent influence of secular inquiry, the force of acquired knowledge entering the mind quietly and in an impersonal way, and inducing conclusions inconsistent with dogma.

Now, realizing how theologic dogma is affected by such influences, let us turn again to the claim of Mr. Martineau touching causation. "It is by an inner necessity of reason," he says, "that we refer all phenomena to an originating power; and precisely at this point it is, where science has already come to an end, that religion begins and undertakes to speak of that which remains when the account of phenomena is closed." But religion speaks to minds no longer filled with the degree of reverence which forbids all inquiry; it speaks to minds which have been in one degree or another disciplined to resist the dictates of authority and to investigate; to minds which have been individualized by the forces of modern surroundings. And how does it speak? Its voice is united in but two things: in uttering its claim to the exclusive right to interpret, and in demanding reverent submission to its utterances. Meanwhile, with a thousand conflicting voices it declares its delineations of causation and of all the antinomies and paradoxes of the supersensual. In view of these palpable facts, how can it be said that science has nothing to do with the province which theology or religion claims for its own?

Upon the scientific scholar most influenced by the fruits of acquired knowledge, there rests a duty from which he cannot escape, of resisting all the assump-

tions of theology or religion by which authority is asserted over his mind,—all assumptions to define causation, to rectify the theologic paradoxes, to command the reason to forego its office and the mind to bow in reverence. As he looks over the accomplishments of science and observes the inevitable decline of sacred authority induced by the influence of progressive knowledge, the conclusion becomes irresistible that the custody of the moral and mental integrity of mankind belongs to science and not to theology, and that, however theology may resist this transfer of custody, its power to resist is lessening with every new fact, with every new discovery of natural law induced through inquiry.

The relation which theology and science respectively hold toward causation and the paradoxes is in some respects like that which they hold toward the question of continuance of life after death. Theology posits as absolute certainty—and therefore beyond necessity of proof—what is usually called the immortality of the soul, and enjoins upon man as a duty to entertain his reverent belief in such immortality. So much, indeed, does it hold this to be a duty, that it measures man's moral character by his capacity or incapacity to develop within him the commanded faith.

Mr. Mill, in his essay on immortality, says :

“The belief, however, in human immortality, in the minds of mankind generally, is probably not grounded on any scientific arguments either physical or metaphysical, but on foundations with most minds much stronger, namely, on the one hand the disagreeableness of giving

up existence (to those at least to whom it has hitherto been pleasant) and on the other the general traditions of mankind. The natural tendency of belief to follow these two inducements, our own wishes, and the general assent of other people, has been in this instance reinforced by the utmost exertion of the power of public and private teaching; rulers and instructors having at all times, with the view of giving greater effect to their mandates, whether from selfish or from public motives, encouraged to the utmost of their power the belief that there is a life after death, in which pleasures and sufferings far greater than on earth, depend on our doing or leaving undone while alive, what we are commanded to do in the name of the unseen powers. As causes of belief these various circumstances are most powerful; as rational grounds of it, they carry no weight at all."<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that a belief in some sort of continuance after the death of the mortal person, although not universal, is very common; the prevalence of such a belief, however, so far from warranting the theological assumption, warrants a complete denial of it. An examination of the efforts of theology to apply its theory discovers the solecism of its claim, in the variety of its almost innumerable delineations of immortality, which range in character from the most precise and definite to the most utterly vague. May not science, therefore, infer the absence of harmony regarding things generally concerning which theology declares its delineations to be most absolute, and certain, and deserving of reverence? The old the-

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, John Stuart Mill, pp. 203, 204. New York, 1884.



ologians who had the Christian faith in keeping sought to meet any resistance to its sweeping claim by attributing such resistance to the wickedness of man, resulting from his fall through Adam's inquiry, and by insisting that a refusal to acknowledge the authority of the Church was proof of the persistent perversity of the human will under the instigation of Satan. Modern knowledge has brought a better perception of moral law, and this, with the disposition to test theory by practice, has impelled the individual theologians themselves in one degree or another to moderate their condemnation. Science, so far as it concerns itself with the question of a continued existence after mortal life, does not in the least discourage the holding of opinion ; all it challenges is theology's assumption to define the particular conditions which follow mortal life and to command reverent acquiescence in its definitions, and this challenge involves the well-being of mankind and the moral conduct of society. In holding that nothing within the field of the supersensual is susceptible of definite delineation by any power in the world, it holds that no moral duty can be imposed upon man to accept as conclusive any of the contradictory efforts of theology to delineate immortality. Upon this principle science stands, pointing to the influence of its fruits in explanation of the movement of the mass of mankind toward differentiation of opinion regarding what may not be known concerning continuance of life after death, and consequently toward a moderation of their sense of reverence for any of the commands of theology or religion.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCLUSION.

THE progress of the human mind in its relation to faith in the supersensual may be divided into two great periods, the first of which marks the general evolution, and the second the general dissolution, of sacred creed. The earliest glimpses we have of man upon the earth exhibit him overcome by a sense of awe concerning all that vast domain of Nature of which he was ignorant. From this beginning there were developed first fetichism and then ecclesiasticism, the latter embracing all the numerous theologies in which ideal attributes of divinity were delineated in almost infinite variety. This variety led to conflict, and out of conflict arose the opportunity for that secular inquiry which marks the beginning of the general dissolution of theology.

The earlier stages of the period of evolution exhibit an immense preponderance of the Ideal. The present stage—the threshold of the period of dissolution—exhibits an unmistakable tendency towards the preponderance of the Real. The two periods together may therefore be said to mark a transition from Idealism to Realism. One of the silent and potent influences producing this transition has been the operation of the law

by which Nature impels man to draw inferences from his environment, and another the operation of the law by which Nature imparts individuality to human faculty. In the first of these is found the cause of inquiry into natural law; in the second the cause of mental autonomy and spontaneity; from the two operating together has resulted all the knowledge that man has acquired. Inquiry, stimulated by surroundings, characterized by spontaneous mental action, has progressed under the influence of its products, each generation having furnished a store of knowledge for its successors. Incidentally have resulted mental discipline and a disposition to discriminate between the Ideal and the Real, involving a gradual diminution of reverence for extraneous authority. Hence we may conclude that that degree of relative truth which the human mind is capable of reaching and holding, depends upon objective examination, test of theory, challenge of authority, and autonomic mental action; and that there is thus implied in the movement an antagonism between authority and persuasion, between theology and secularism.

There are doubtless many who, while recognizing the general tendency of this movement, will be reluctant to admit that it involves the ultimate dissipation of all worshipful feeling, or that such dissipation is necessary for the highest degree of human knowledge. But I would ask any one who has made a strictly objective study of the movement, to point out a goal at which the progressive force of surroundings shall cease to exert that influence by which the mind of man is impelled to examine, to

challenge authority, and to bring ideals under the test of reason, and where ideals once overthrown may regain their former supremacy.

Some facts are so established by experience and observation that when attention is directly called to them they compel acknowledgment. Mankind, at its present stage of development, exhibits all degrees of credulity regarding objects of faith. We need not go beyond Christendom to find numbers of men who, although they have grown so liberal as to smile at the narrow beliefs they once entertained, and to wonder at the horror they once felt for the least challenge of those beliefs, can still revere a lesser formula belonging to the same category, and entertain a like horror for any challenge of it. For example, there are Christians whose acquired knowledge has impelled them to abandon the doctrine of predestination, and has caused them to wonder that they ever held it, but who nevertheless cling to the doctrine of the Trinity as one of their most sacred prepossessions. There are men who can regard the whole theologic theory as in conflict with knowledge and reason, and who realize that they can conceive of no rational attributes for a worshipful divinity, who yet entertain reverence for that which they themselves set forth as the unknowable, and associate all duty with that reverence.

Although the existence of such varieties is generally acknowledged, the logical conclusion derivable from it is not. Those philosophers who reason that reverence, because now prevalent, must continue prevalent, even though formal supersensual creeds

disappear, cannot fully appreciate the uncompromising quality of the silent influences at work. Let them first contrast the beginning of the movement toward dissolution with its present stage, and then study the conditions of its intervening progress. Let them note how mankind was once possessed of unlimited credulity ; let them consider how many earnest and honest inquirers among their own contemporaries are dispossessed of this feeling ; then, turning again to history, let them observe the very slight mental movement characterizing the first inferences which man was impelled to draw from his surroundings—how this first inquiry involved an unperceived trespass upon that authority which commanded that man should not eat of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge—and how each inquiry has stimulated further inquiry. Let them leave the historical retrospect and measure the qualities of science by its fruits, and those of theology by its fruits ; let them examine the difference between that order of thought in which sacred authority is held supreme, and that in which persuasion is held supreme ; let them observe how characteristic it is of sacred authority to repress individual thinking, and how characteristic of science it is to encourage such thinking. Such an examination will reveal to them an issue between two antithetical modes of thought, in which compromise or truce is impossible—an issue between reverence and non-reverence, between authority and freedom, between knowledge of natural law and ignorance of it, between realism and idealism ; it will reveal a contest which has arisen from natural

necessity, by which man has been impelled to inquire,—a contest by which he is impelled progressively to inquire, as the only means of lessening his ignorance of natural law. This contest involves the constant challenge of sacred idealism and sacred authority, and nothing in it warrants the belief that it will cease as long as any sacred authority or any reverence for ideals remains.

Two of the most salient characteristics of sacred idealism are personality and subjectiveness. These qualities are manifested much in the same manner with the Indian as with the Persian devotee, and with the Christian as with the Indian. Rational consistency plays no part in any sacred idealism. To every idealist, divine wisdom, justice, and love seem exhibited not as wisdom, justice, and love are understood or learned from human experience, but as expressing undiscriminated emotions; to his feeling they become perfect by being thus undiscriminated. Nothing gives him a higher sense of assurance of the personality of divinity than what he takes to be the divine commendation to him of his own delineation of divine attributes, and the divine condemnation of every delineation of attributes that conflicts with his. Sacred idealism, then, begins by impressing upon the individual an intensely personal and subjective feeling; thenceforth, all the inconsistencies of the idealist's ideals assume to him the aspect of spiritual harmonies. In his interpretation of the impersonal manifestations of Nature, he invokes his reason to confirm his preconceptions of divine beneficence as manifested in that class of phe-

nomena which reason pronounces beneficent, but utterly ignores the office of this same reason touching that class which reason pronounces non-beneficent. If he be a Christian, in his effort to support an ideal Christianity he will ignore every untoward fact of history concerning the actual historical course of Christianity. The animosities engendered by Christian idealism do not furnish to him the least import of the evil effects of animosity. He will repudiate all suggestion that knowledge in its progress has ever encountered an obstacle in his reverence; indeed, in his unbounded confidence, he will attribute every step of knowledge directly to the effect of the reverence which he feels for his particular ideals. If, on the other hand, he be a Mahometan, he will with the same impulse repudiate the Christian ideals as being replete with delusions leading to everlasting perdition, and hold his Mahometan faith to be the only support of all that makes life tolerable or dignifies death.

When he comes to deal with his personal relation to mankind, he manifests the same vagaries. His sense of reverence for his creed impels him, as a first duty, to seek to exercise a kind of police power in bringing all with whom he comes in contact within the bounds of his particular worship. The very humility which moves him to bow to sacred authority blinds him to the aggressive character of the conduct which that authority requires of him as its agent. Although a Protestant, studying the Inquisition, can perceive the union of aggressiveness with reverence for authority in the spirit with which the

devotees tortured the dissentients, and although a modern liberal theologian may detect the alliance of aggression with humility in the behavior of his Puritan ancestor who, fleeing from oppression for his creed's sake, employed the same oppression against weaker holders of other creeds; yet neither Protestant nor liberal theologian can perceive anything but modesty in the behavior which his own reverence requires of him; neither can infer that his exertions to bring others within his faith involves any invasion of their right to think for themselves. The conscious excellence of his intent conceals from him the association of aggression with his reverence. There can be no doubt of his purpose to do his victim good; but the whole basis of religious persecution rests on the assumption by the persecutor, that his good intention justifies any effort he may make to bring others under the particular feeling of divine illumination which he believes he possesses. The lighter manifestations of this union of aggression with humility as they are exhibited in the conduct of the more liberal theologian, are apt to be unperceived by the casual observer; but when we consider the quality of reverence, and note its specific behavior in any mind, we must realize that reverent submission to authority always involves, whether consciously or unconsciously to the subject, a disposition to exert upon others the demands which characterize all sacred authority.

A coincident characteristic of sacred idealism is personal irritability. No one can entertain rever-



ence for an ideal without resenting every personal expression of reason which tends directly to question the supremacy of that ideal. A liberal theologian may join a secular student in the study of alien objects of reverence, with equanimity and philosophy. He may feel impelled by the highest moral purpose to expose the incongruity of such objects, to condemn the ignorance and superstition which reverence supports, the blinding influence which it exerts upon the minds of its victims; he may join in declaring that the honest profession of spiritual illumination made by these victims serves only to secure their delusions from the influence of reason. So far as the liberal theologian makes his study thus objective, his judgment plays an important part; but the moment reason comes to be employed by others touching his own sacred prepossessions, irritation instinctively arises in his mind to suppress his judgment; he denounces objective examination as impious; he proclaims what he calls his spiritual illumination as a vehicle of divine wisdom, which absolutely determines the truth of his ideals; he holds his sacred ideals to be as far above that reason and knowledge which he employs against alien ideals as he holds alien ideals to be below such reason and knowledge. Here is a personality which no verbal argument can reach. The irritation and tenacity exhibited by a Mahometan, a Christian, and a Hindoo, may differ in degree, but never in kind. Each alike holds as impious and profane any unreverent approach to his ideals. There is no instance in which reason brought to bear directly against an

object of reverence does not address itself to the reverent mind as the result of mental and moral hardihood; there is no instance in which even indifference to sacred prepossessions does not seem to him who has those prepossessions as incompatible with innocence.<sup>1</sup>

Now let us look again at some of the aspects of moral incongruity which are involved in the personal line of argument employed by the Christian theologian as the highest justification for his faith. One may

<sup>1</sup> In the Parliament of religions which sat in Chicago in September, 1893, among all the representatives there was not one who manifested a disposition to yield any part of his sacred ideals; indeed, discussion was deliberately excluded from the programme of the Parliament, and such tests of faith were thereby avoided as far as possible. Each representative doubtless felt that he had in his possession the highest quality of sacred ideals, and that he might possibly bring the others to accept them. The representation was larger than was expected, and the variety of ideals presented was considerable. The Romanist representative exchanged greetings with the Protestant, and Roman and Protestant representatives with the disciple of Mahomet, the pagan Hindoo, and the atheist of Buddha. But the representative of the Church of Rome manifested no disposition to compromise the infallibility of the Pope, nor did the devotee of Buddha or of Mahomet exhibit the least inclination to exchange his faith for the dogmas of Christianity. The orthodox Christian came away holding in the same reverence as before the Books which taught that "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than we have preached, let him be cursed"; nor did the Mahometan relinquish his faith in the words of the Koran which taught him that "Whoever followeth any other religion than Islam shall not be accepted in the last days, and in the last days he shall be of those that perish." If any effect can be said to have been produced by the Parliament, it was one unintended by its projectors, the bringing of a variety of conflicting ideals—each assumed to be spiritual illumination—somewhat nearer to the bar of knowledge.

weekly hear from the modern pulpit the proposition that, inasmuch as no higher duty can be conceived than that by which the Christian clings to the faith which he feels to be the sole expression of divine truth, he must therefore try by all means in his power to bring others to reverence his ideals. The difficulty of this proposition is patent when we study the manner in which each idealist himself seeks to apply it. The Christian feels that, Christianity being the only true faith, he could not honestly conform his conduct to Mahometan ideals; the Mahometan feels that, Islam being the only true faith, he could not honestly make Christianity his guide of life. It is because the reverence which each entertains for his own particular ideals makes them seem true to his mind, that he determines they are absolutely and objectively true. This assumption from personal feeling entirely excludes reason and marks every instance of the theologian's purpose to set a value on his own individual sincerity which he utterly denies to the sincerity of others, if the sincerity of others applies to a different set of ideals. In every instance he implies that his sincerity guards divine illumination, and that the sincerity of all who worship other gods or submit to other creeds is but a support of superstition. When we examine the characteristics of sincerity and reverence objectively, and find the Mahometan seeking to appropriate absolute truth, precisely as the Christian does, we perceive that, if sincerity did indeed certify objective truth, it must certify conflict as truth. Reverence operates in the same manner upon the individual as

it does upon all theology, and upon all theology as it does upon the individual ; it is the characteristic alike of sacred idealism and of sacred authority ; its influence is thus universal, and it conflicts with the universal principle of individual mental and moral integrity. Fidelity to one's convictions, so far as concerns one's self, is so universal a duty that it applies with equal force to the humblest and to the highest mind, to the most reverent and to the most secular ; hence, when one resolves that, in order to be true to his convictions, he must seek by any exercise of authority to bring another under the same convictions, he proposes to monopolize a universal principle. Because it is universal, it cannot be exclusively appropriated by any individual or by any class ; and an effort to monopolize it is simply an effort to contradict the patent fact of its universality.

A pre-requisite therefore for the determination of the influence of reverence upon the human mind is, that he who enters upon the study of this influence shall have a mind divested as far as possible of all predilection ; that the faculties which undertake to make a thorough examination of the influence of awe upon the human mind must be disenthralled of awe ; that the study must be an objective one. Such a study will teach us that reverence, although it may affect men in different degrees, affects all men in the same manner ; that he who reveres a fetich believes in it assincerely as does the Christian believe in the ideals which he reveres ; that he who reveres the ideal precepts of conduct set forth in Christian ethics, but does not bow to any other dogma of Christian theology,

may feel the same sense of self-honesty as he who accepts literally all Christian traditional teaching. When the student sees how varied and heterogeneous is the great sum of ideals upon which reverence acts—when he sees how theology, while demanding reverence for all its dicta, exhibits the widest conflict between these dicta as enunciated through its various sects and its various individual devotees—he is confirmed in his conclusion that sincerity and reverence are insufficient certifiers of truth. And when he appreciates the subtle influence which gives specific ideals their tenacity in the reverent mind, and invokes hostility against all personal persuasion and reason—when he sees how reverence disposes the mind to associate submission to authority with a sense of duty to resist persuasion—he infers the insufficiency of personal reason and personal persuasion as counter-influences, and thus comes to realize the supreme importance of the impersonality of those forces which do really reach and affect the feeling of reverence. He looks to impersonal Nature for the gradual displacement of man's sense of awe for ideals. Here he finds a law which determines, regardless of the purposes of either theologian or secularist (regardless especially of all assumptions of extraneous authority, whether exerted by one phase of theology or another), that secular inquiry is the inseparable condition of the progress of knowledge. He finds that, incidental to the operation of this law, individual mental activity and discipline are acquired, tending to the dissipation of the sense which interferes with inquiry.

The unprecedented extension of inquiry into Nature's laws during the present century confirms the conclusion that the fruits of knowledge stimulate progressive inquiry, and that inquiry so developed disciplines the individual mind, enlarges the area of reason and the scope of spontaneous thought, and thus lessens the power of extraneous authority. It also leads to the conclusion that the sense of freedom acquired by the individual expresses itself in mental autonomy, and that, although many minds may continue to have prepossessions more or less sacred, the multiplying phases of prepossessions develop diverse ideals, which, counteracting each other, render necessary constant appeal to the common reason and experience of mankind, as the only means by which the relative value of the conflicting ideals may be determined. This movement does nothing to diminish man's right duty to his convictions; that duty remains the same to one who has no reverence for sacred authority as to one who is still over-awed by such authority; but the subject-matter upon which conviction acts changes through the impulsion of surroundings; and just as one is responsive to the influence of these surroundings, he becomes disposed to think for himself, and to examine those things which authority once closed against him. He is thus led toward a recognition of the principle that the right of one to his convictions involves the right of all to their convictions; and this principle makes against all theologic authority, progressively weakening the power of theology to command convictions which are not in

accord with human reason. In brief, history shows that as surroundings differentiate and vary ideals, a mental movement takes place which does not accord with the underlying purposes of theology.

In the progress of this movement there arise a constantly increasing number of thinkers who reach a condition of complete non-reverence for all sacred authority. When these come to examine and analyze sacred ideals and to test them by fact and experience, they realize their blinding influence upon the human mind; they realize how the very idea of ideal perfection exhibits the solecism of holding ideals as absolute and final truth; they realize that the very necessity for progress in which the human race is placed, excludes the idea of that completion which ideal perfection imports; that the only means we have of obtaining any step of this progress is through the study of our imperfections, through the effort to obtain further knowledge, and that the largest accord possible among different minds results from the subjection of all ideals to the tests of such knowledge as we have. They see that every effort of the human mind to comprehend the meaning of ideal perfection exposes the futility of that effort.

Their examination therefore teaches them that although reverence may afford the largest scope for the cultivation of that dialectic skill which Tennyson calls the "tierce and quart of mind," although it may cause men to lead devout lives, to render implicit obedience to authority; although it may impart a degree of ecstasy never vouchsafed to the secular inquirer, and afford visions which seem to its posses-

sors to compensate them for all the ills of life, it contradicts the profound principle of intellectual and moral integrity, and interferes with the progress of knowledge and of morals; it supports that assumption of authority which has throughout history treated as defiant and perverse all those who antagonized its conflicting claims, and it has furnished to the world all the conflict and inconsistency which is exhibited in the sum of the world's religions. From these considerations, the secular students conclude that reverence is the signal infirmity of the human mind.

From the thoroughly secular point of view, all men stand as manifestations of Nature in the centre of an immense multitude of phenomena, environed with limitations and imperfections. Just as they have been impelled by a sense of awe, they have sought to reach beyond their mental limits for certainties, and have assumed that they found these certainties. By idealizing and clothing their ideals with the garb of sacredness, they have felt that they have overcome the conditions of imperfection which environed them. Out of the prevalence of this feeling the assumptions of authority arose, and the command was issued for the worship of ideal delineations. Each nation, as it was born, assumed power to proclaim through its priests the supremacy of its ideals and to condemn the ideals of all other nations. Assyria, Greece, Egypt, and Judea, each in turn constructed its theology and commanded unquestioning reverence for its own specific gods and uncompromising hatred for each other's; and this each did with authority



the same in kind as that with which the priests of the different phases of theology to-day command reverence for their delineations and condemnation for alien delineations. Each religion is divided into sects, and each sect claims for itself alone the fulness of illuminated wisdom which is superior to all knowledge, and this claim of each implies a denial of like illumination to every other sect; meanwhile, the individual devotee of each sect entertains within himself the sublimest confidence that his particular ideals, and the individual ideals which accord with his, are under the especial direction of divinity, and that the Omnipotence which guides them must make them at length universal.

The march of the human mind has been slow, but notwithstanding this slowness it is gradually developing the appreciation that that impersonal law of Nature which conditions knowledge upon the subjection of ideals to investigation, is uniform and universal; that under the influence of this one law, the inventor and the discoverer, the political economist and the sociologist, the ideal moralist and the sacred idealist, must all alike at length come; that by whatever different degrees these different classes exhibit a disposition to recognize or to resist the law, such difference does not in the least import any variableness in the law itself. If the inventor, the discoverer, the economist, and the sociologist submit their theories to test more readily than do the ideal moralist and the sacred idealist, it is because invention, discovery, economy, and sociology more directly and immediately depend upon such submission; and

however the ideal moralist and the sacred idealist, relying upon the more ethereal quality of their theories and impelled by their reverence for those theories, may resist submission, they too must finally submit. Nothing can be more of a fallacy than to suppose that Nature pursues one method in dealing with secular theory, and another in dealing with reverent theory. The whole movement of her law determines that there is one path, and only one, which marks the course from ignorance to the highest attainable knowledge, and that this path lies in the line of the ultimate subjection of *all* ideals to the tests of progressive knowledge. It is under the influence of this law that astrology has been supplanted by astronomy, alchemy by chemistry, the old cosmogony by geology. Under the influence of the same law, mankind are coming slowly to learn that they cannot harmonize antinomies by reverencing ideals concerning them ; that they cannot, by imagining it as ideal, make justice something other than is that justice which is learned through experience. As they are slowly borne from ideal contemplation to a study of what Burke has called the "ill-husbandry of injustice," they learn that there is injustice, and not justice, in that condemnation for opinion's sake which is inseparable from reverence for ideals.

Coincident, and in complete harmony with this law, is that other law of Nature, equally uniform and equally universal, by which human faculty is conferred upon mankind in variety, and by the influence of which ideals are diversified.

However jealously, then, the reverent idealist may seek to keep his ideals apart from test by assuming that there is something like an *alter ego*, or some extraneous sacred power that may properly limit man's inquiry, every acquisition of knowledge resulting from inquiry presses the whole world nearer the conviction that worship and adulation are not only not the true supports of wisdom, but that they are interferences with the acquisition of that degree of knowledge which the world is otherwise capable of attaining.

Nothing remains but to sketch briefly the personal attitude of the secular student to the theologian. This relation is subject to conditions which seem to me clear. In the first place, realizing—as the thorough secularist must—how very small a part direct personal disputation plays in the decline of reverence in the world, and how very large a part forces which are impersonal in their character play in effecting this decline, he may refrain from all aggressive and personal disputation with his fellows. As he acknowledges no high-priest of theology with power to dictate conclusions, he may recognize that he has no warrant for setting up any authority of science for such dictation. Nay, he may even meet the assumptions of authority with that spirit of non-resistance which the theologian preaches but does not practise. When, by those who assume to speak with authority, his quiet non-reverence is stigmatized as aggressive irreverence, his calmness as insensibility, his patience as callousness, his firmness as obduracy, his honesty as pretence, his independence as defiance ;

when he is charged with being engaged in a deliberate effort to destroy the sentiments, to break down the sanctions of friendship, of love, and of human brotherhood, and to debase the moral standards of the world, he may feel that he is not thereby justified in making retort in kind, nor even in depending upon personal reasoning to allay the aggressiveness of his accusers. Harsh and unjust as he feels the theologic anathemas to be, he will rest his hope on those slow and impersonal methods by which secular surroundings operate upon the reverent mind. His non-resistance will not import the weakness of surrender, but simply his clearer recognition of the impotency of wrangling as the means for promoting the movement of free thought.

In the second place, still realizing the potency of the impersonal forces, he will find no occasion for the organization of any propaganda, or for the formation of any party or society or cult, as a means of furthering the movement of secularism.

No consideration, however, touching his immediate personal relation with the theologian need forbid the secularist from resolutely pursuing his examination with a view of determining for himself and for those of his way of thinking, the propriety or the impropriety of these theologic condemnations. When he is told that secularism but signalizes the decay of the sentiments, he may ask himself whether the sentiments may not really have a more ample being through a dispassionate examination of their phases—through a careful study of their actual behavior—than they can have by holding them in

reverence and refusing to examine them—whether, indeed, reverence is any more necessary for learning the true office of the sentiments than would be a worship of the Greek or Roman gods, the means of truly appreciating the poetry of Greece or Rome. When he is told that without worship for ideals friendship must deteriorate, and love fail, he may ask himself whether those of his way of thinking really exhibit less appreciation of their friends or hold their loves less dear, because they cannot reverence those ideal precepts by which man is commanded to love all mankind alike. When he is told that morals must decline as obedience to authority which commands reverence for formal creeds declines, he may ask himself whether morals can rest upon a foundation which has even the least element of immorality in it ; whether any power in the world can trespass upon the principle of individual mental and moral integrity, and still be a moral power ; whether, under the principle of individual mental and moral integrity if it is the first duty of every man living to be true to his convictions, it is not his next highest duty to seek by all means in his power to examine the subject-matter of these convictions in order that they may be kept in accord with the mental and moral progress of the race. When he is told that the brotherhood of man depends upon reverence for ideals he may ask whether this does not presuppose an ideal brotherhood very different from any that may be realized. In studying the conditions of actual brotherhood, he is not forbidden to question the

influence of those powers which, whilst they proclaim peace and good-will, also proclaim a sword, setting man at variance against his father, and daughter against her mother, making a man's foes they of his own household ; of those powers which by commanding reverence for ideals have arrayed nations against nations, and sects against sects, in a way that has left a red mark through history. He is not forbidden asking whether that patient inquiry which does not command acquiescence, but asks only consideration for the results of its labors, does not more comport with the real brotherhood of man than does that authority which causes its devotees to condemn all those who have not believed that they have not seen, which causes each of these devotees to say in terms to every man : " You shall believe as I do, or you shall not be my brother." When he is told that it is morally necessary for all human beings to bow to some extraneous authority, he is not forbidden to study the character of the authority for which the claim is made, and if finding it of a kind that forbids examination and commands acquiescence, he is not forbidden contrasting it with the qualities of that other kind of authority the express purpose of which is to guard the individual in the right to his convictions, which commends him to examination of his convictions as a means of verifying them—that kind which, by preventing obstructive influences, furthers human liberty and liberty of thought, that kind which restricts the Socialist because the Socialist seeks to assert his individual license in trespass of the common right, that kind which stays ecclesiastical

assumption because this assumption interferes with individual mental and moral integrity; that kind of authority, in short, which recognizes individual self-restraint as the foundation of the largest possible human freedom, and concerns itself with the prevention of all influences that tend to interfere with the growth of that self-restraint.

Besides, the secularist's personal relation with the theologian does not forbid him to examine theology and secularism in their respective relation to the intrinsic qualities of modesty; it does not forbid him asking whether one who, acknowledging all beyond what may be rationally inferred from phenomena to be inscrutable, really treats it as inscrutable, who, facing the fact of his imperfection, admits the impossibility of his grasping any truths which lie beyond his mental reach, has less grounds for modesty than has another who, admitting, as he must, the inscrutability of the Power which he calls God, contradicts his admission by assuming that he is possessed of miraculous enlightenment which enables him not only to define his inscrutable object of worship, but to require reverence from others for his definition.

# INDEX.

## A

- Absolute Being**, 237.
- Absolute Truth**, superiority of relative truth to the assumptions of supramental dicta, 42; tendency of relative truth to displace the assumptions of absolute truth, 83; influence of surroundings in certifying relative truth as superior to pre-existing conceptions of assumed spiritual and absolute truth, 97; theologic sincerity in the assertion of the dignity of assumed absolute truth and in the denial of the value of relative truth, 133; manner in which the assumptions of absolute truth are gradually displaced by relative truth, 133-134; the issue between relative truth and the assumptions of absolute truth an issue between authority and persuasion, 137; see **Authority**.
- Advanced Theology**, see **Theology**.
- Anathema**, decline of the theologic anathema against knowledge, 291; inconsistency of the theologic anathema, 291, 292 and n.
- Apprehension of spiritual loss** a drawback to the acquisition of knowledge, 328; see **Consolation**.
- Archæology**, the theological student's inadequate conception of the purpose of, 309; reverence an interference with archæological study, 310; Brugsch-Bey's conclusions regarding the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, 311, n.; the Exodus of the Hebrews not mentioned in any of the records of ancient Egypt, 311, n.; the intense devoutness of the ancient Egyptians and the emotional character of their theology indicated by their temples, monuments, and papyri, 312, 313; the Egyptians' *Book of the Dead*, 315, n.; the solemnity of their funeral service, the intimate association of the teaching of moral conduct with their sense of certainty, 315; the prominence of theology in Egyptian literature, 316, 317.
- Argument**, relative influence of either abstract or personal argument and impersonal surroundings, 17, 18, 39, 110, 111, 191, 254, 375.
- Astronomical discoveries** of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton, and their influence upon the discoverers and upon theology, 26-38.
- Aurelius, Marcus, The Thoughts of*, citation from, 223, n.
- Authority**, the value of, dependent upon consistency with developed knowledge—the tendency of surroundings to moderate assertion of sacred authority, 41, 42; inadequacy of spiritual authority as a means of reaching truth, 110; conflict between ecclesiastical authority and individual mental autonomy, 176,



177; influence of ecclesiasticism on national character, 294; the theologic theory of a seat for, 333; the reverent devotee's realization of the untoward influence upon other minds of reverence for authority, his unconsciousness of such influence upon his own, 334; vagueness of Protestantism upon the question of a seat for sacred authority—importance of a clear delineation of such seat—the seat of authority not possible in both the Church and the individual, 338, 339; the theory of the seat of, in an ecclesiastical body exemplified by the Church of Rome, 340; the scientific theory that the seat of sacred authority is in the individual alone, 340; the Protestant theory of the seat of, 340, 341; the preservation of individual mental and moral integrity the strongest ground for resisting theologic assumptions, 348; inconsistency of the advanced theologian's effort to exert sacred authority, 349, 350; evolution and dissolution of sacred creed—development of ecclesiasticism from fetichism—development of secular inquiry from ecclesiastical conflict, 359; aggressiveness characteristic of all sacred authority, 366.

## B

- Bacon, Lord, his *Novum Organum* and *De Augmentis*, 13; Romanism charged by him as the cause of the industrial paralysis of the Middle Ages, 13; the full import of the Reformation not realized by him, 15; his views of the syllogism, 17 and n.
- Bacon, Roger, discoveries and inventions of—a victim of ecclesiastical repression, 13, n.
- Bampton Lectures, *Limits of Religious Thought*, citation from, 238-240.
- Belief, virtue of sincerity of, 92, 93.

Believer, the believer's indisposition to examination of the objects of his belief, 83, 84; force of impersonal surroundings in changing views of, 86, 87.

*Book of the Dead*, see Archaeology.

Brewster, Sir David, cited, 29, 32, n.

Brugsch-Bey, cited, 310, n.

Buckle's *History of Civilization*, cited, 172, n.

## C

Certainty, the two standards of, characterizing the progressive and the conservative phase of thought, 255; the relative value of the secular and the reverent sense of—introspective study as a means of reaching conclusions, 256; see Absolute truth.

Chabas, M., cited, 315.

Christianity, its relation to justice considered, 213-223; the sweeping claim that justice is a strictly Christian virtue, and that Christianity has been a supporter and promoter of virtue and civilization—the necessity for learning the subject-matter of Christianity, and of examining the qualities of justice—Christianity to be considered as a whole, 214, 215; Rome the custodian of, for nearly fifteen centuries—the charge of Protestantism that Rome obstructed the progress of civilization, 216; the secular and the theologic ideas of justice compared, 217, 218; methods of Christianity's growth, 219, 220; two antithetical phases of, exhibited by its conduct and its precepts of conduct, 220, 221; the intensely emotional character of early Christianity a reason for its substitution for the apathetic pagan mythology, 221-223; readiness of individual self-sacrifice exhibited by the early martyrs no proof of the verity of dogma, 223; growth of the Church power not

- due to practice of its precepts, 224; the beginning of coercion in matters of belief marked by the acquisition of civil power through the conversion of Constantine, 225; the precept of non-resistance not practised by Ecclesiastical Power, 226; unsuitableness of the Church's sacred precepts for practice by the world at large, 227; contrast between the conduct and the teachings of the Church, 228, 229; a practice of Christian precepts destructive of the ends sought, 230; civilization retarded by the influence of, 233; degrees of credulity exhibited by Christians touching objects of belief, 361; incongruity of the Christian theologian's personal line of argument in justification of his faith, 368.
- Church, The, its power unaffected by reasoning, but lessened by physical science in causing a necessity for successive adaptations of creed, 20, 21; movement of, indicative of changed conceptions, 77; its early suppression of intellectual freedom—credulity its highest requirement, 294; see Theology; see Authority; see Christianity.
- Classes, the different classes in the secular movement, 263-271; see Secularism.
- Conscience, mediate and immediate conscience defined, 87, 88.
- Consciousness, the metaphysical idea of intuition, 50; inadequacy of introspection for teaching the attributes of, 51; statement of the law of, 74, 75; individuality of, 76.
- Consolation, Religious, a feeling of gratification derived from the contemplation of sacred ideals—consolation as a guard for the preservation of creed—influence of, in ancient systems of theology—influence of, in ancient Egyptian creed—the theological student's bias in studying ancient religions, 308, 309; the valuelessness of, as a certifier of modern creed inferred from its valuelessness as a certifier of ancient creed, 322; behavior of modern devotees under influence of—the personality of individual devotees and of religious bodies, 323, 324; consolation alike derived by different sects from different interpretations of the same supposed act of God, 325; tenacity of the reverent mind in its reliance on—influences affecting religious consolation, 326, 327 and n.; the devotee's philosophy in contemplating his discarded ideals, 328; the consolations of early Christianity and of the ancient religions conditioned upon ignorance—Nature's progressive and impersonal manner of destroying faiths which afford consolation, 329, 330; consolation derived from theologic dogmas no warrant of their truth, 331, 332.
- Copernicus, his dedication to the Pope of *The Astronomical Bodies*—anxiety of, to reconcile his discovery with his theology—his apprehension of ecclesiastical prejudice—the conflict of his theory with various biblical accounts, 26, 27, 32, 33.
- Creed, unity of, incompatible with mental progress, 78; suppression of thought under Roman Catholic ascendancy and the prevalent ignorance resulting therefrom, 78; belief in, no ground of its objective verity, 152, 153; moderation of opinion in matters of faith due to the influence of science, 166; the wish among theologians for a modification of, 305; unfavorable influence upon unity of creed found in the varying products of theologic longing, 306; conviction of truth of, as influenced by consolation, 308; creed alike necessary to theology and to religion, 336, 337 and n.

## D

- De Divisione Naturæ*, citation from, 18, n.
- Determinism, the dogma of determinism or necessity and the dogma of free-will as held in the early Christian Church, 352.
- Devil, The, tendency of modern theology to discard the idea of a personal devil, 251.
- Discovery, distinguished from invention, 25, 26; influence of, upon the discoverer and upon theology, 26; influence of the astronomical discoveries, 32-38; progress of, retarded by theological persecution, 35; early influence of, confined to the higher thought, 37; relative influence of discovery and invention, 38, 39; progressive influence of, upon the decline of theology, 262.
- Diversity of human faculty, universality of the law of, contrasted with the limited operation of the law of heredity, 66-69; relation of Nature and theology to, 70; importance of, to progressive civilization, 71, 72; incongruity of, with theory of one faith, 72; the impersonal operation of the law of, 73; mental diversity the cause of the assertion of the right of individual interpretation, 73.
- Dogma, the liberal theologians' view of traditional dogma, 117, 118; individual self-sacrifice no proof of verity of, 223; see Authority.

## E

- Ecclesiasticism, retarding effect of, upon the minds of the masses, 12; characteristics of, analogous to those of militancy—growth of mental individuality among the masses impossible under ecclesiastical domination, 47, 78; see The Church.
- Egyptology, see Archæology.
- Electricity, former belief in supernatural origin of—a more general knowledge of its laws learned after its application to industrial uses, 38, n.; electricity no longer generally regarded superstitiously, 109 and n.
- Emerson, R. W., cited, 114, 331.
- Endowment, Natural, see Intellectual Faculty.
- Environment, influence of, upon the individual's views, 2; see Surroundings.
- Erigena, his early heretical utterance, 18, n.
- Ethics, the theologic and scientific theories of, distinguished, 170-178; the theologic theory of, statical, the scientific theory of, progressive, 171, 172; contrast of the theologic with the scientific method of gauging conduct, 173-175; the individual's intention and accord with creed the theologian's main gauge of conduct, 175; the theological method of estimating conduct illustrated, 176; influence of reverence upon the theologic mind in dealing with, 179, 180; Sermon on the Mount, 181-184; influence of ideals in undermining morals, 190; ethics not statical, 191, 192; difference between the theologic and the scientific estimate of the emotion of love, 197; the natural difference between men disregarded by theologians, 198; the family relations, 199-201; inapplicability of the Golden Rule to actual life, 202-204; the secular estimate of justice, 205; the spirit of the theologic precepts, 206; the difference between the theologic theory and practice concerning moral precepts, 208; the spiritual vagueness of theology contrasted with the definiteness of science, 209; application of moral precepts to practice necessary, 209, 210; vagueness a pretext for neglecting efforts to practise precepts,

- 210, 211; the mind diverted from real conduct by the contemplation of ideal precepts, the consequent aberrations of conduct, 212; Christianity in its relation to justice comprehensively considered, 213-222; faith and good intention not a sufficient gauge for correct thought and conduct, 231, 232; intensity of faith a bar to a proper conception of justice between men, 233; justice, love, and goodness best learned by a study of their actual qualities, 241, 242; hate, injustice, and badness necessary correlatives of love, justice, and goodness, 242; theology's moral efficacy denied by science, 248; love and justice best learned as human qualities, 250; secular ethics supplanting theologic ethics, 253; progressive influence of secularism upon the morals of mankind, 284; the moral purpose of the early schismatics and sceptics contrasted, 285; the relation of ecclesiasticism and secularism to changes in moral standards—the striking contrast between the standards of behavior of a primitive era and those of advanced civilization—the progressive character of the change in moral standards, 293, 294; the moral standards of ecclesiasticism contrasted with the moral standards of secularism, 294; the theologic and the secular method of accounting for the different standards of morals at variance, 295; the secular means of gauging conduct, 296, 297; relation of the modern Protestant theologian to the progress of morals—the progress of morals due to the growth of inquiry made possible by the Reformation, 299; Martin Luther on the superior importance of belief over moral conduct, 324 and n.; religious consolation not necessarily dependent upon morality in action, 324.
- Evolution, influence of the theory of, 25
- in lessening belief in a special creation, 105, 134; see Surroundings.
- Excommunication, gradual decline of the force of, 292.
- Exegesis, the force of exegetical criticism in moderating the rigor of scriptural interpretation first felt in Germany, 96; the exegetical scholar's position in the secular movement, 274-277; the theologic and the scientific estimate of, 278.
- Exodus of the Hebrews, 309 and n., 310, 311.
- F
- Farrar, F. W., his arraignment of intolerant theologians, his own attitude to science examined, his position less logical than that of his ignorant brethren, 98-100.
- Feelings, The, and reason co-ordinate phases of mind, 50.
- Freedom, the diversity of ideals due to mental freedom—the demand of science for the individual right of mental freedom, 167; disappearance of reverence for the unknowable conditioned upon the full recognition of individual freedom of thought, 167; mental freedom expresses itself in mental autonomy and individual self-restraint, reverence discouraged by the enlargement of this freedom, 371.
- Free-will, the polemic treatment of predestination on the one hand, and of free-will on the other, 353, 354.
- French Revolution, increase of sceptical discussion due to it, 19.
- G
- Galileo, his invention of the telescope—astronomical discoveries of, and the support they gave to the Copernican Hypothesis—condemned by the Church—efforts of the Church to obscure his discoveries, 29, 30; efforts of, to harmonize his

- discoveries with his theology—treatment of, by the Inquisition—his submission, devotion, and penance, 33, 34.
- Geology, theologic condemnation of, 98; influence of teachings of, in lessening a belief in the creation of the world by fiat, 105, 134.
- Gibbon, effect of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (16th Chapter) upon sceptical thinking, 19; cited, 288.
- H
- Hamilton, Sir William, cited, 131, n.
- Heredity, limited nature of law of, contrasted with the universality of the law of diversity, 66-69.
- Heresy, early appearance of, Erigena cited, 18, n.
- Hume's *Essay on the Miracles*, effect of, upon sceptical thinking, 19.
- I
- Idealism, ideals only shades of individual feeling, unified conclusion concerning them impossible under mental freedom, 55, 56; influence of, in undermining morals, 190; the decline of idealism and ecclesiasticism coincident with the growth of industrialism and secularism, 296, 297; transition from, to realism, individual mental autonomy and inquiry into natural law promotive of this transition, gradual diminution of reverence resulting from the transition, 360; ultimate result of movement from, to realism, 361; slow decline of reverence exhibited in history, 362; the issue between reverence and non-reverence one between authority and freedom, between knowledge of natural law and ignorance of it, between realism and idealism—a challenge involved in the movement of sacred idealism which cannot cease so long as reverence for ideals remains, 362, 363; personality and subjectiveness characteristics of sacred idealism, exhibited in all religions—irrational qualities of sacred idealism in dealing with the emotions, 363; irrational qualities of sacred idealism in dealing with the manifestations of Nature, 364; inherent aggressiveness of sacred idealism, 364, 365; aggressiveness characteristic of all sacred authority, 366; relation of, to the brotherhood of man, as distinguished from the relation of secularism to such brotherhood, 378, 379.
- Ignorance, reverence for, a condition of religion, 165.
- Illuminati, The, and Mystics, 188, n.
- Imagination, the limits of its usefulness, 59.
- Immediate Conscience, definition of, 87, 88; illustration of, by St. Paul's conduct, 89, 90 and n.; limits of its verifying power, 91; the virtue of sincerity of belief, 92, 93 and n.; a public man of intense immediate conscience a dangerous possession to a nation—the conduct of Philip II. of Spain and Charles I. of England, examples of the pernicious effects of a narrow conscience, 92, n.; immediate conscience the source of individual sense of verity, but no warrant of objective verity, 94.
- Immortality, relation of science to the dogma of, 140; the idea of, not prominent in ancient religions—the denial of, in the Old Testament—a belief in, not common among the Hebrews prior to the coming of Jesus, 318, 319 and n.; the Assyrian and the Babylonian view of, 320; the Hindoo view of, 321; the immortality of the soul as dogma, 358.
- Impersonal, the impersonal phase of movement as it affects ethics, 191-194; impersonality of natural law, 244; Impersonal Tribunal consisting of the body of secular knowledge, its growing strength, its

- permanent predominance assured, 288-290; supreme importance of impersonal influences touching the feeling of reverence, 370; see Surroundings.
- Industrial Classes**, not metaphysicians, 3, 4; their lack of dialectic skill—conclusions of, derived from physical illustrations, 4; occupation of, a hindrance to their acquiring the philosopher's discipline, 4; attitude of, toward theology a negative one, 9; no bond of union between the industrial classes and the metaphysicians, 11; tendency of, towards practical thought under the influence of their surroundings, 18.
- Industrialism and Secularism**, analogous characteristics of, as distinguished from militancy and ecclesiasticism, 47, 48, 78.
- Industrial Surroundings**, see Surroundings.
- Inquiry**, freedom of, essential to progress, 40; inquiry virtuous and not vicious, it induces judgment from evidence, lowers personal authority, and removes reverence, 40, 41.
- Intellectual Faculty**, diversity of, coincident with mental activity, progress, and freedom, 53-54; differentiation of, a universal law, 66. See Diversity.
- Intellectual Surroundings**, see Surroundings.
- Introspection**, inadequacy of, for teaching the qualities of consciousness, 51.
- Intuition**, variously called by metaphysicians "consciousness," "inner consciousness," and by theologians "spiritual sense," "spiritual insight," and "divine guidance," 50; efforts of metaphysicians to determine consciousness by Introspection, 51; the scientific method of treatment of, 81-83; see Consciousness; see Diversity; see Metaphysics; see Mediate Conscience; see Immediate Conscience.
- Invention**, distinguished from discovery, 25; influence of, upon men's theologic beliefs, 26; force of, in widening the area of human thought—relation of, to philosophy, 37-40.
- J**
- Job**, The Book of, recent interpretations of certain verses in, 319, 320, n.; God's favor extended to Job, 319.
- Judgment**, the Protestant theologian's desire to limit private judgment, 74; the moderation of, induced by scientific investigation, 160-162; in theologian's objective examination of reverence his judgment plays a part, 366.
- Justice**, the relation of Christianity to, comprehensively considered, 213-223; justice an universal and not a partial principle—ill-husbandry of injustice, 375; see Ethics.
- K**
- Kepler**, astronomical discoveries of—the influence of theology in suggesting to him the theory of a presiding angel for retaining each planet in its orbit, 28, 29; constant efforts of, to reconcile his discoveries with his theology, 33.
- Knowledge**, how valued by the philosopher and how by the inventor, 38; the secular character of the influences of, 42; the growing recognition of relativity of, 162-164; the tardy appearance of moral knowledge due to theologic restraint upon inquiry, 240, n.; interruption to the progress of, in consequence of the theologic assumption exclusively to determine causation, 346; see Nature.
- L**
- Law**, the law of consciousness, 74-75; the decline of reverence due to a

- better comprehension of natural law, 109 and n.; the impersonality of natural law, 244; the law which conditions knowledge upon challenge of all ideals universal, 374, 375; see Nature; see Diversity; see Parsimony or Parsimony.
- Locke, John, cited, 324.
- Longing, failure of, to verify creed exhibited in variety and conflict of products of, 305; the growing indefiniteness of theologic longing, 306.
- Luther, Martin, attitude of, towards the Reformation—his narrow construction of the individual right to interpret Scriptures, 130; obedience to command held by him as superior to moral conduct—view of, that faith alone is necessary to salvation, 324, n.
- M**
- Mansel, Dean, cited—his definition of Absolute Being—reasoning of, upon the Absolute—his treatment of the attributes of divinity, 237-241.
- Martineau, James, his distinction of the provinces of science and theology—individual relation of, to theology, 333; argument of, on causation, 334, 335; his view of authority in religion, 336 and n.
- Masses, The, the effect of polemical-sceptical discussion in making the mass of believers more submissive to Church authority, 12; relation of the metaphysician and of the theologian to, 61, 62; their modes of thought as influenced by scientific surroundings, 107; mental movement of, due to individual observation of phenomena rather than to polemical discussion, 108; the masses not familiar with metaphysical processes, their tests of scientific theories through daily experience, 107, 108.
- Mediate Conscience defined, 87, 88.
- Mental Diversity; see Diversity.
- Metaphysica, the metaphysician's estimate of the industrial classes, 3, 4; influence of metaphysical philosophy upon the common mind misestimated, 6; authoritative attitude of, toward the masses—metaphysical processes of thought uncomprehended by the common mind, 7; metaphysics repressive of the common mind, 8; the study of, not alluring to the masses, 11; the metaphysical philosopher's indifference to the popular audience, his contempt for physical philosophy, 11; the quality of, in the light of the behavior of metaphysicians towards each other—influence of modern physical science upon, 50; multitude of schools of, and tendency of, towards division, due to the operation of the law of mental diversity, 52; the question of the usefulness of pure metaphysica, 59; the conflict between metaphysicians resulting from freedom of thought, 60.
- Militancy, characteristics of, analogous to those of ecclesiasticism, 47, 48; influence of militancy and ecclesiasticism upon thought, 78; militancy and ecclesiasticism as distinguished from industrialism and secularism, 78.
- Mill, James, cited, 58, n.
- Mill, John Stuart, cited, 74, n.; 238-239, n.; 241, 242.
- Mind, progressive influence of surroundings upon, 128; influence of secular study upon, 252; the slow march of the human mind due to reverence for ideals instilled in childhood, 374; see Diversity of Human Faculty.
- Morals, see Ethics.
- Morley, John, cited, 138, n.
- Mystics, The, and Illuminati, 177, n.
- N**
- Nature, manifestations of, learned by the masses mainly through physical

- illustration, 4; Nature's independence of man, 45, 46; decline of reverence due to a better comprehension of natural law, 109 and n.; impersonality of natural law—conflicting interpretations of Nature's manifestations by different sects only reflexes of individual emotion, 244; the impartiality of,—reverence a bar to knowledge of, 258; the theologic and the scientific interpretations of,—reward of, to inquiry, indifference of, to worship, 260, 261; attitude of, toward the theologic and scientific senses of certainty, 262, 263; man as a manifestation of, 373, 374.
- Necessity, the dogma of determinism or necessity and the dogma of free-will as held in the early Christian Church, 352.
- Newton, Sir Isaac, citation from memoirs of, 29 n.; his discovery of the principle of universal gravitation governing the planetary system, 31; endeavors of, to harmonize his discoveries with his theology, 34.
- O
- Omnipotence, the theory of free-will treated by the disciples of Necessity as inconsistent with, 354.
- Origen, the germs of the doctrine of purgatory began with, 352.
- Orthodoxy, logic of, more consistent than that of liberal theology, 98-102.
- P
- Paine, Thos., the source of power of his writings, 20.
- Parcimony or Parsimony, law of, 43, 44, 131, n.
- Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 367, n.
- Perdition, the tendency of the decline of the theory of everlasting perdition to promote free discussion and Church division, 112.
- Personality, coincident with the emotions, 242; form essential to, 245; see Ethics.
- Philosophy, the mental gifts requisite for the higher philosophy not common, 4; influence of metaphysical philosophy upon the common mind mis-estimated, 6; influence of the Reformation upon secular philosophy, 13; the change of, from metaphysical to physical, from authority to persuasion, 15, 16; the philosopher's changed attitude toward the masses, 16; the extended use philosophy made of the discoveries in pointing out the antagonism of knowledge to theology, 36; the scientific philosopher's attitude toward intuition, his subordination of ideals to knowledge, the harmony between his mediate and immediate conscience, truth not accepted by him from authority, his ideal-forming faculty secondary to his reason, 81, 82.
- Physical Science, see Science.
- Pithom, discovery of ancient site of, 310.
- Poole, Sir Reginald Stuart, cited 310, 311, n.
- Poor Laws of England, the result of emotional legislation, 189.
- Power, Ultimate, the non-personal character of, to be inferred from the behavior of natural law, 236; the impersonality of, 243; theologic and scientific delineations of, 245-250; Ultimate Power recognized by theology and science alike as existing beyond what is known of Nature—theology's delineations of, derived from an assumed spiritual sense—the delineations of, by science, wholly inferred from the manifestations of Nature, 295, 296.
- Predestination, polemic treatment of the doctrine of predestination on the one hand, and of the doctrine of free-will on the other, 353, 354.
- Private Judgment, see Judgment.



Protestantism, relation of, to the principle of private judgment, 299; the Protestant dread of Romish supremacy unfounded, 301; the Protestant theory of authority, 340, 341; see Reformation.

## R

Realism, see Idealism.

Reasoning, to be affected by, not a matter of choice, 2; insufficiency of dialectic reasoning for the industrial man, 10, 11; estimate of, by the metaphysician and the industrial worker, 18; insufficiency of wrangling to affect Church power, 20, 21; the theologic mode of, from the human form, and from the human emotions, 236, 237.

Reformation, The, necessarily encouraged resort to private judgment—indirect influence of, on theology and on secular thought, 13; largest significance of, misinterpreted by Protestant and Romanist alike, 299; estimate of, by the Romanist, Protestant, and secular student, respectively, 299, 300; its greatest consequence the opportunity it gave to free secular inquiry, 300, 301; see Protestantism.

Relative Truth, see Absolute Truth; see Authority.

Religion, meaning of, 146, 147; its invariable implication of reverence for the supersensual, 147; views of Mr. Leslie Stephen and Mr. Herbert Spencer as to its continuance, and an examination of the grounds for these views, 147-149, 155; gradual subsidence of, indicated by the lessening of reverence through sectarian divisions, 148, 149; the past existence of, no warrant for its future continuance, 150; the claims of, to be measured by their harmony or inharmony with secular knowledge—constant modification of, entailed by the progressive

nature of knowledge, 150; religion irreconcilable with science, 154, 157; Mr. Herbert Spencer's suggestion of the dependence of the vitality of, upon complete ignorance of the Ultimate Cause, 158-159; the existence of, dependent upon reverence for ignorance, 165; theology and religion substantially convertible terms, creed essential to each, 336, 337 and n.

Renouf, P. Le Page, cited, 313, n.; 315, 317 and n.

Reverence, the feeling of, obstructive to full appreciation of natural law—the Parsee fire-worshipper—analogy between the case of the Oriental fire-worshippers and the modern theologians, 257, 258; Dr. Arnold's views of, 351, n.; slow decline of, exhibited in history, 362; the issue between reverence and non-reverence one between authority and freedom, between knowledge of natural law and ignorance of it, between idealism and realism—a challenge involved in the movement of sacred idealism which cannot cease so long as reverence for ideals remains, 362, 363; fidelity to one's convictions a universal duty—because universal, not to be exclusively appropriated by any individual or sect—necessity for objective examination of, 369; the sum of ideals in the world upon which reverence acts varied and heterogeneous, sincerity and reverence therefore insufficient certifiers of truth—supreme importance of impersonal influence touching the feeling of, 370; the natural law affecting reverence operates irrespective of the purpose of theologian or of secularist, 370; mental freedom expresses itself in mental autonomy and individual self-restraint, as this freedom enlarges it discourages reverence, 371; constantly increasing number of think-

ers reaching a condition of complete non-reverence under the influence of this law—the manner in which they come to regard reverence, 372; reverence the signal infirmity of the human mind, 373; the slow march of the human mind due to reverence, 374; universality of the law which requires the subjection of all Ideals to examination, 374, 375.

Romanism, the ultimate supremacy of, rendered impossible by growing intelligence and knowledge, and the consequent lessening of all reverence for creed, 301 and n.; the final issue between theology and secularism is the issue expressed by science on the one hand, and by Rome on the other, 340; see Theology.

## S

Sacred Sense, insufficiency of, for securing unity of creed, 106; retarding effect of, upon scientific study, 144; extreme personality of, 306.

Sacred System of Thought, see Theology.

Scepticism, the failure of early polemical scepticism to move theology, 12; the decline and the activity of, 18; the revival of sceptical discussion caused by the French Revolution, 19; attitude of polemical sceptics towards theology, 113; scepticism distinguished from secularism—the relation of each to morals, 284, 285; antagonism between the early sceptics and the Church—the virtues of the early sceptics mainly of a militant kind, 286, 287; the unintended encouragement given to scepticism by the Reformation—modification of the hatred between scepticism and ecclesiasticism by an Impersonal Tribunal consisting of the body of secular knowledge, 288-290; the quiet and unperceived change from destructive scepticism to constructive secularism—the limited field of the early sceptic

and the extended field of the modern secularist, 290.

Science, influence of the fruits of physical science in lessening Church power, 21; modern science the product of discovery and invention, 25; the scientific and the theologic method of teaching contrasted, 43, 44; the relative value of science and theology for testing the value of a supramental sense, 79, 80; the scientific and the theologic employment of the imagination contrasted, 82; science's treatment of theory, 83; the superior efficacy of, due to impersonality of, 95; persuasive nature of, 110, 111; respective attitude towards, of the ultra-conservative and the liberal theologians, 112, 113; the estimate of theology by the disciples of science, 113; the gains of science the losses of theology, 133; the weak beginning and gradual growth of, 133; the superiority and the antagonism of the relative truths of, to the sacred assumptions of theology, 133-137; the denial by, of the right of authority in presenting belief for general acceptance, 138-143; the relation of, to the dogma of the immortality of the soul, 140, 358; retarding influence of the sacred sense upon the scientific student possessing it, 144; the nature of the scientific scholar's progressive movement, 145, 146; science essentially non-reverent, 146; the scientific student's estimate of the value of reverent intuition governed by the inharmony of its fruits with human knowledge, 151; the bounds of science's operations, 154; science and religion irreconcilable, 157; the impersonal influence of scientific fruits in inducing moderation of judgment, 160-161; recognition of the relativity of knowledge promotive of respect for private judgment—the growing definiteness of scientific knowledge and the growing indefiniteness of theologic dogma, 162-164;

moderation of opinion regarding all matters of supersensual faith due to science, 166; growth of the power of, as a support for relative truth, and the decline of the power of theology as a support for authority, 169; the province of, distinguished from that of theology, 334-336; the issue between science and theology stated, 336, 337; the impossibility of circumscribing the province of, as related to theology—the thinking induced by, different from that induced by theology, 342, 343; see Ethics.

Secularism, characteristics of, analogous to those of industrialism, 47, 48; its denial of theology's right to authoritative dictation of opinion, 142; the secular student's better capacity for knowing justice between man and man, 233, 234; the secular student able to draw rational inferences from Nature's manifestations, 245; important influence upon the mind of secular study, 252, 253; its progressive and conservative phases considered, the different standard of certainty characteristic of each, 255; the relative value of the secular and the reverent senses of certainty—the difficulties of introspective study of the reverent sense of certainty, 256; the indirect effect of secular knowledge upon religious prepossession, 257, 258; the actors in the movement classified, and their characteristics discussed, 263-272; the ignorant and the superstitious moved only *en masse*, 263; the industrial workers, the newspaper and the novel their main literature, influence of their occupation in creating indifference to sacred authority, 264, 265; the students of industry, their superficial thinking and wild theories, 265-268; the mystical class, 268; the polemical sceptics, not efficient coadjutors of science, 270; the exegetical schol-

ars and liberal theologians, their activity and diversified opinions, 270, 271; the disciples of advanced science, 271; progressive and retarding influences within each class discussed, 272-279; the exegetical scholars and liberal theologians as illustrating the movement within class—the influence of the modern sciences in inducing the critical biblical student's initial study, his progressive but involuntary loss of reverence, the contest in his mind between the natural and the supernatural, his reliance on his spiritual sense for the support of his remaining faith—the inadequacy of sacred intuition for the support of supersensual truth inferred by science from the mental movement of the exegetical scholars and liberal theologians, 274, 275; the unintended results of the exegetical scholar's studies, the exegetical scholar more of a result than a cause in the movement, exegesis as a solvent of theology, 276, 277; the progressive character of secular influence, 279; exaggerated estimate of a class's importance by its members, 280; the progress of a class as a whole due to the preponderance of the progressive forces, 281; the position of the liberal theologians due to their recognition of natural law, and the position of the narrow theologians due to their reverence for the supersensual, 281; the movement as it exhibits the predominance or the suppression of reason, the tendency to inquire or to revere, 282; the standards of morals accompanying secularism—secularism distinguished from early scepticism, the relation of each to morals, 284, 285; influence of, in modifying the tone of ecclesiasticism, 291; relation of, to morals not appreciated by the modern theologians, 297; the influence of

- secular thought as exhibited by the liberal theologian, 302-307; the progressive influence of knowledge illustrated by a contrast of the advanced theologian with the narrow formalist, 302; the progressive character of secular knowledge, and the static character of sacred prepossessions as exemplified in the professional theologian, 328, 329; personal attitude of the secular student towards the theologian, the conditions of his relation, 376; the secularist's hope for the disappearance of reverence founded upon the effect of slow and impersonal influences of surroundings—secularism has no occasion for the organization of a propaganda, or for the formation of any party, sect, or cult, 377; influence of, upon the sentiments and upon the morals of mankind, from the secular point of view, 376, 377; relation of, to the brotherhood of man, as distinguished from the relation which idealism holds to such brotherhood, 378, 379; relation of, to modesty, 380.
- Sermon on the Mount, conclusions derived from, 184-188; see Ethics.
- Sincerity, virtue of sincerity of belief, 92, 93 and n.; individual sincerity an unassailable virtue, 292, n.; fidelity to one's convictions a universal duty, 369; sincerity and reverence insufficient certifiers of truth, 370; see Ethics.
- Spencer, Herbert, on the continuance of religion, 147, 148; on the conditions for permanent peace between theology and science, 156; on the relation between the prevalence of religious feeling, and ignorance or knowledge of the Ultimate Power, 157; see Religion.
- Spiritual Sense, the theologic expression of intuition, its quality examined, 50; the conflicting nature of its products exhibited through the theologians, 64, 65; see Intuition; see Religion.
- St. Paul, his conduct employed to illustrate conscience, 88-90; cited, 100, 159.
- Stephen, Leslie, on the continuance of religion, 147, 148; see Religion.
- Student, the lay student's movement from theology to science induced through the influence of surroundings, 104, 105.
- Surroundings, industrial and intellectual surroundings distinguished, relative influence of, upon theologic belief, 1; the relative preponderance of the influence of industrial and intellectual surroundings indicated by their results, the influence of the former usually under-rated and that of the latter over-rated, 6; relative influence upon the masses of abstract argument and impersonal surroundings, 17; the quiet nature and superior value of industrial surroundings for producing the mental growth of the masses, 23; the dynamic character of secular surroundings, 46; the progressive influence of secular surroundings upon the human mind, 128.
- T
- Tennyson, cited, 373.
- Theology, influence of industrial and intellectual surroundings upon theologic belief, 1; theologic thought replaced by secular thought, 11; the source of theologic power over the masses in producing reverence through high emotion, 11; influence of the Reformation upon, 13; influence of the discoveries upon theologic belief, 32; the quality of, viewed from a study of the behavior of theologians toward it—the influence of modern physical science upon, 50; a contrast of the attitude of theology and metaphysics tow-

ards the masses, 62; coercion and sophistication the theologic means for securing uniformity of belief, 62; the sacred nature of theology's premises, 63; agreement concerning extinct theologies, variation of opinion respecting those existing, 65, 66; theology's loss of authoritative sanction through the variety of convictions concerning conclusions from which it furnishes no appeal, 77; the relative power of theology and science to test the value of a supramental sense, 79, 80; the different employment of the imagination by theology and science, 82; the theologian as an illustration of the operation of the law of the two consciences, 97; the force of scientific surroundings in certifying the superior value of relative to spiritual or absolute truth—the theologian's reluctance at parting with portions of revelation due to the nature of theology, 97; the inconsistency of the advanced theologian's attitude toward his less advanced brethren, 98, 99; the mental inharmony of the advanced theologian, the antagonism between his sacred sense and the teachings of science, 102; his professional character a hindrance to the theologian's scientific progress, 103, 104; the change of tone of, and the variety of thought in, due to science, 112; attitude of the theologian to, and influence of science upon, 119; the liberal and the conservative theologians, 115, 116; the dilemma and inconsistency of the advanced theologian's position, 116; advanced theology encouraged by variety of quiet thought in discussion brought about by science—free thought stimulated by the decline of the theory of everlasting perdition—attitude toward science of the ultra-conservative and the liberal theologians—the polemical

sceptics' attitude towards—the scientific student's estimate of theologies—the search of truth for truth's sake, 112, 113; the sacred sense a hindrance to the search for objective truth, 115; the liberal and the conservative theologians distinguished, 115, n.; the indefiniteness of the remaining larger faith of the advanced theologian, 117; the dogmas rejected and those retained by the advanced theologian, 117-119; the inadequacy of the sacred sense illustrated in the movement of the advanced theologians, 120; the attitude of science and that of theology toward belief contrasted, 121, 122; the relation of the advanced theologian's progress to progressive science, 123, 124; ignorance and enlightenment the respective conditions of the theologian's conservatism or advancement, 124, 125; the advanced theologian's philosophy in contemplating his past progress, 126; the analogy of the advanced theologian's progress to that of those beyond him unperceived by him, the lessened intensity of his faith and his changed attitude to the student of science, 127; the compulsory nature of the advanced theologian's progressive movement, 128; theology's loss the gain of science, 133; the influence of relative truth upon the advanced theologian's remaining faith, 135; the contest between theology and science as to the merits of sacred truth contrasted with relative truth, 136, 137; the theologian's difficulty in searching truth for truth's sake, the incongruity of his idea of an Omnipotent Power, 138; the constant decline of theology's power to retard the further progress of knowledge, 168, 169; the growing power of science to furnish relative truth, 169; intensity of faith a bar

to the theologian's proper conception of justice between man and man, 233; the theologic inferences from the human form and from the human emotions, 236, 237; the insufficiency of theologic dialectics—the inconsistency of the dogma of a Personal God with a human sense of justice, 237; Interpretations of Nature's manifestations by different theological sects only the reflexes of individual emotion, 244; theology's moral efficacy denied by science, 248; the tendency of modern theology to dispense with the idea of a personal devil, 251; the progressive influence of discovery upon the decline of, 262; the Unitarian as a representative of liberal theology, the conflict in him of the secular and the sacred sense of certainty, 278; contrast between the position of the Unitarian and that of the Romanist, 279; the decline of the theologic anathema against knowledge, the inconsistency of such anathema—the narrow theologian a product of a System, his individual sincerity not to be deprecated, but the System to be challenged, 291, 292 and n.; the steps in the evolution of the Sacred System of thought, 300; the successive modifications of, 301; the diminution of theologic reverence by silent and unperceived forces, 303; the weakness of theologic resistance to knowledge seen by the advanced theologian in others, but not in himself, 304; the desire among theologians for a modification of creed, 305; the province of, distinguished from that of science, 334-336; creed, dogma, and reverence for ideals involved in theology and religion alike, 336, 337 and n.; the issue between theology and science stated, 336, 337; the subsidence of rancor in discussing theologic paradoxes,

354-356; incongruity of the theologian's personal line of argument in justification of his faith, 368; demands of, throughout history for unquestioning reverence of its different gods, 373, 374.

*Things Which Cannot Be Shaken, The*, citation from, 117-119.

Thought, unity of conclusion concerning ideals impossible under freedom of, 55, 56; expansion and tendency of, towards secularism, 128; restraint of theology upon, 129; effect of the Reformation in extending thought beyond the intended point—thought as a factor in lessening authority, 130, 131; coincidence of the absence of spontaneous thought and the prevalence of theologic domination, 132; individual freedom of, the condition of the disappearance of reverence for the unknowable, 167; theologic uneasiness regarding the drift of modern thought, 207.

Truth, the metaphysicians' lack of unity of conception of, 51, 52; an objective study of, impossible to the theologian owing to his sacred sense, 113-115; individual search for, incompatible with the theologic theory, 330; see Absolute Truth.

Tycho Brahe, the utility of his observations mainly in furnishing data for his successors, his rejection of the Copernican Hypothesis, his veneration for the Church, his theory of the earth's stability and the revolution around it of the sun and the planets, 27, 28; his mis-estimate of the greater influences resulting from his work, 33.

## U

Ultimate Cause, knowledge or ignorance of, in its bearing on religious belief, Mr. Herbert Spencer's views, 157-158; theology's assumption of power to explain Ultimate Cause consid-

ered, 341; self-contradiction of the  
theologic theory of, 343, 344; the  
inherent insufficiency of theologic  
interpretations of causation, 345;  
theology's innumerable conflicting  
delineations of, 347.

Ultimate Power, see Power Ultimate.

Ultimate Truth, see Truth.

Unity of Faith, see Faith.

## V

Verbal Reasoning, 2; over-rated as a  
factor for inducing the masses to  
thought, 108; see Argument; see  
Impersonal Influence.

Voltaire, the greater influence of his  
writings due to his wit and satire,  
19, 20.





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